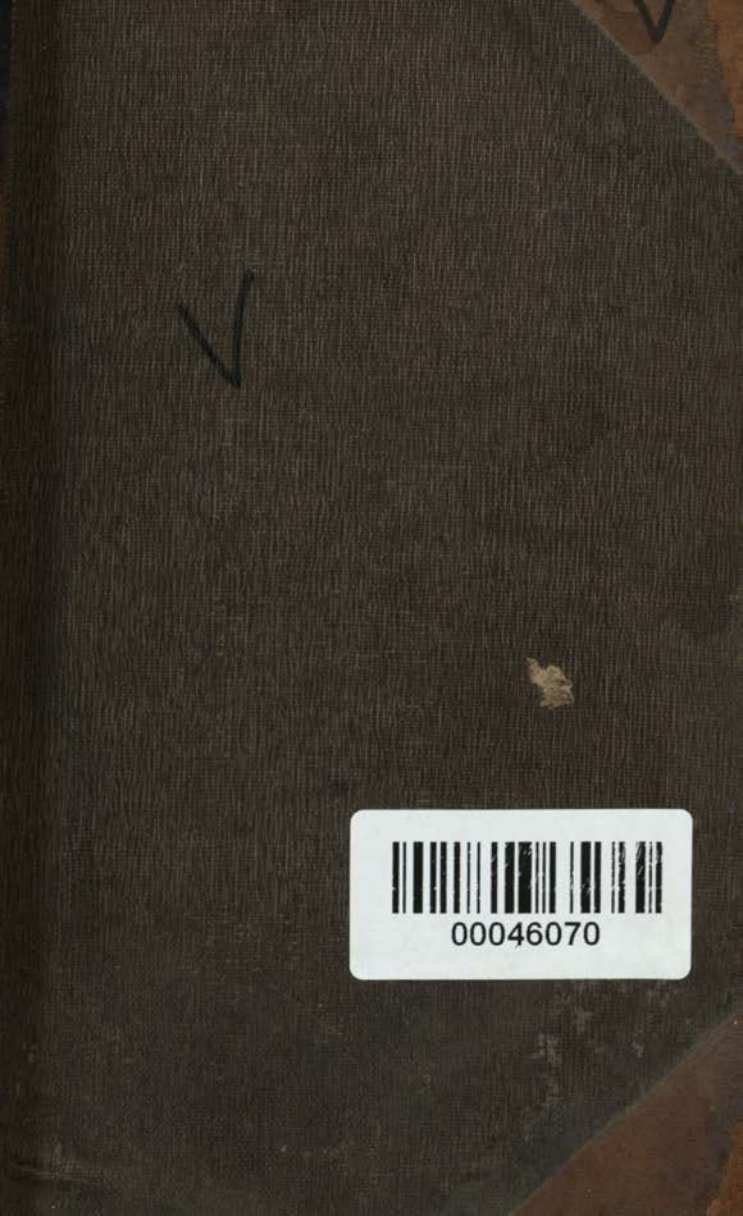
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THE

SECRET OF DEATH

[From the Sanskrit]

WITH SOME COLLECTED POEMS

46070

BY

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Dedication.

TO MY DAUGHTER.

Because I know my verse shall henceforth live
On lips to be,—in hearts as yet unbeating;
Because the East and West will some-day give—
When Faith and Doubt are friends, at some far meeting—
Late praise to him who dreamed it;—therefore, here,—
As one that carves upon a growing willow
The word it is to keep for many a year;
As one that paints—before she breasts the billow—
A dear name on his vessel's prow; as one
That, finishing a fane, makes dedication
With golden letters on the polished stone,
Crowning his toil by loving celebration;—
Here,—while these last—our love I celebrate,
For thy sake and thy Mother's;—writing "KATE."

EDWIN ARNOLD.

Christmas, 1884.

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INTRODUCTION.

YOU ask me, Dear! what perfect thing
I find in all my wandering
These ancient Sanskrit scrolls amid,
Where India's deepest heart is hid?
Nothing, I answer, half so wise
As one glance from your gentle eyes!
Nothing so tender or so true
As one word interchanged with you!
Because, two souls conjoined can see
More than the best philosophy.
Yet, wise and true and tender lore
Waits him who will those leaves explore,
Which, plucked from palm or plantain-tree,
Display, in Devanâgarî,

The grand, sonorous, long-linked lines
Wherethrough that "Light of Asia" shines.
And you have asked; so I obey,
Hastening upon your knees to lay
This lovely lotus-blossom, grown
Long ere our Mary's Rose was blown;
This pearl of hope, fetched from the sea
Before they fished at Galilee!
For thus, I think, your kindest eyes
May read deep truth with glad surprise.
The subtle thought, the far-off faith,
The deathless spirit mocking Death,
The close-packed sense, hard to unlock
As diamonds from the mother-rock,
The solemn, brief, simplicity,
The insight, fancy, mystery
Of Hindoo scriptures—all are had
In this divine Upanishad.

I read it in my Indian days.
Beyond our city, where the ways

Parted—for Looni and Kirkî—
A hill, steep-sloping you might see.
It rises from the river's bank,
And all its sides are green and rank
With spear-grass, bamboo, cactus, thorn;
And bright with fragrant blossoms, borne
By neem and baubul; and the air
Sighs cool across a prospect fair
Of Deccan villages and fields,
Where the dark soil rich tribute yields
Of pulse and millet. Farther back,
Śivaji's mountains, flat and black,
Fold round the plain. Upon that hill
There stood (I think it stands there still!)
A little shrine, in ancient days
Built by a Sett to Siva's praise;
Milk-white it glimmered through the green,
Save that upon its gate was seen
A blood-red hand impressed, and, near,
The three-fold mark to Siva dear.
Sacred and placid was the place,
With cool, smooth walls, and slender grace

Of domed roof, and a peepul tree,
And platform of hewn masonry,
Whereto the distant city's hum
Came soft, with broken beats of drum
Which did not mar the solitude;
For all around that temple cooed
The creamy doves; striped squirrels leaped
From stem to stem, the musk-rat peeped
Under the wall; beside the porch
Flamed the red lizard like a torch
Flung on the rock; the egrets stretched
Their snowy wings; green parrots fetched
Fruit to their young with joyous cries;
The monkey-peoples' mild brown eyes
Glittered from bough and coping-stone;
And—underneath a root—alone,
Dwelt a great cobra, thick and black,
With ash-grey mottlings on his back,—
A most prodigious snake!—but he
Kept the peace, too, religiously,
With folded hood, and fangs of death
Sheathed, while he drew his slow, cold breath,

Coiled in the sun, or lapped the feast
Of warm milk poured him by the Priest.

For in that Temple lived a Sage,
A Twice-born, reverend by his age
And wondrous wisdom; and, it fell
For some small service,—vain to tell,—
This Brahman was my friend; and so,
Ofttimes at daybreak I would go
To watch the sunlight flood the skies,
And ask of strange philosophies.
Thus chanced it that one morn we had
Talk on this same Upanishad,—
(Beyond my learning, then, as now,)
But herein is it written how
I slowly spelled the text we read,
And, at the hard words, what he said—
(For nowise shall one comprehend
Such lore without some sager friend—)
So have you, Dear! the help I had
Conning this great Upanishad,

While the snake sunned himself at ease,
And monkeys chattered in the trees,
And on the Moota-Moola lay
The first gold of the growing Day.

THE SECRET OF DEATH.

[In a Temple beside the River Moota-Moola, near the city of Poona, a Brahman Priest and an English "Saheb" read together from a Sanskrit MS. the first three *Vallîs* or "Lotus-Stems" of the *Kaṭha Upanishad*.]

FIRST VALLÎ.

Saheb. UŚAN HA VAI VAJAŚRAVAS—the scroll
Commenceth thus! SARVVAVEDASANDADAU—
Which is, interpreted: "For hope of heaven
All that he had, Vajaśrava's great son
Gave to the poor."

Priest. 'Tis so!

S. TASYA HA NÂM
PUTRA ÂS NACHIKÊTAS: "and of him
The son was Nachikêtas."

P. Yea! the scroll
Speaketh of one who saw Death face to face

And questioned Death, and from dread Yama's lips
Learned utmost lore of life and death; and—dead—
Liveth for ever and for ever. Read
This holy scripture onward! I will still
Recite the comment.

S. DAKSHIṆÂSU, Sir!

KUMÂRAN SANTAN NÎYAMÂNÂSU
ŚRADDH'ÂVIVESHA: "When the gifts were brought
Strong filial pity seized the young man's heart."—
(What gifts, and wherefore, Pundit?)

P. These were cows;
And because Gautama was poor, his cows—
The leanest of the fields—furnished a gift
Worthless to take or give, save for the heart
Of utter charity which offered them.

S. So 'MANYAT—thus it runs: "And then he thought,"
PITÔDAKÂ, "Such beasts as drink the pool,"
JUGDHATRINÂ, DUGDHADÔHÂ, "and eat,
Milkless, the grass," but "NIRINDRIYÂ, "keep
No power to breed;" TÂ DADAT GACHCHATI
ANANDÂ NAMA TE LOKÂSTÂN SA,

"Who giveth such, unto a region goes
Joyless;"

P. Good! this he thought,—and then he said?

S. SA HOVÀCH PITARAM TAT, MANDASYASI·
KASMAI: "And then he said unto his sire,
'To whom wilt thou that I be given?'"

P. Aye:
'Tis thus; but, comprehendest thou? The boy
Grieved so to see his father's fruitless gift—
Which could not profit; that for tender love
Himself he offered, saying, "Give me, sir!"

S. DWITYAN TRITIYANNAN HOVACH: "when that twice,
And thrice he said it, Gautama his sire
MRITYAVÈ TWA DADÂMI, spake, in wrath,
To Death I give thee!"

P. 'Twas a hasty cry
Sprung from the pride no saint should ever feel!
Ah! foolish father! now thy son must die!

S. BAHÛNÂMÊMI PRATHAM "I am first
Of many sons," BAHÛNAM MADHYAMA,
"But, of as many more not first nor last!
KIM SWIDYAMASYA KARTIVYAM YANMAY

ADYA KARISHYATI, "what good use
Of Yama may I serve, dying to-day?"

P. See now! the boy was humble, ranking not
Even his own sweet spirit with the best;
Yet, best he was; and, though the scroll saith naught,
Be sure that woeful father wept, and cried
"Alas! I spake in wrath, guilty and rash!
Alas! I would not buy Heaven's self with thee!
Oh, son! take back thy word, that I may take
My heedless utterance back! my child! my child!
How could I slay thee, who would die for thee?"
Whereto the lad replied:—Repeat the script!

S. ANUPAŚYA YATHÂ PURVVÊ—"Sir! bethink
How those of old, the saints, clove to their word;
How those who live to-day must cleave to it!
Like sesamum ripens our mortal life;
Like sesamum 'tis reaped, sifted, and sown
To grow again."

P. He meaneth: "not for life—
Which is but blade, and ear, and husk, and grain
To the self-living, changeless sesamum!—
Not for this fleeting world,—should holy men

Speak one word vainly." Now, again, thy scroll
Is silent here; yet, thou may'st justly think
The woeful father bowed his head, and knew
The boy's speech good, and bore to see him go,
That both their sayings should be justified.
So went he—seeking Death—to yield himself!
But coming, all unsummoned, to the house
Where red Death dwells, no Yama found he there
To bid him bitter welcome. Then he lodged
Three days and nights in the abode of Death
A guest untended. Take the scroll, anew,
And read of Nachikêtas in Death's Hall
Alone!

S. VAISWÂNARA PRAVIŚHATYATI
ATITHI GRIHAN BRÂHMANO, "a guest
That is a Twice-born, entering at the door
Cometh like sacred fire;" TASYAITÂN
ŚÂNTIN KURVVANTI, HAR VAIVASWATA!
UDAKAM: "Unto such the righteous make
Due guest-rites, saying, oh, thou child of Light!
Have water here, food, shelter." Then it writes:
AŚÂPRATOKSHÊ SANGATAN, "good heart,

Good expectations, friendships, favour, grace,
Strong sons, and fruitful cattle; all these gifts
Forfeits that faultful man in whose abode
A Brahman, entering, findeth proffered not
Food and foot-water."

P. True! the sense is so!
And Yama coming home, and seeing there
Young Nachikêtas, all unhonoured, saith:
TISRÔ RÂTRIRYADVÂTSIRGRIHÊ—read!

S. "Three days and nights, oh, Brahman! tarriedst thou,
None bringing thee, who art a noble guest,
Food and foot-water! therefore, now, to thee
Repentant salutations! and to me
Forgiveness for this sin! But, 'ere thou diest,
Ask me three boons, for each past night one boon."

"Then Nachikêtas said: 'That Gautama
Be comforted; and restful in his mind;
Thinking fair thoughts of me, who die for him.
This, of thy three boons, Yama! first I ask.'"

"Answered the God of Death: 'This boon I grant;

Thy father shall be comforted, and think
Gentle and holy thoughts of thee; shall sleep
Peaceful at nights, knowing—by dreams I send—
Thou hast made happy passage of Death's gate.'"

P. Now Nachikêtas asks again—and mark
How simple-sweet our Sanskrit rolls along!
See, too, how bold he speaks to Yama here!
NA BHYAN KIṆCHA SWARGÊ LOKÊ—read!
NÂSTI, NA TATRA TWAN.

S. NA TATRA TWAN—
"In Swarga-lôk'—in the abodes of Heaven—
There is not any dread; nor, any more,
Terror of thee! Thou art not there; nor tears,
Nor thirst, nor hunger, nor the aches of life!
But, fled past farthest reach of grief, the souls
Sleep safely in that place. If that place be,
Thou knowest, Yama! how the sacrifice
Is kindled which may gain it: make me know;
That I, who die, may light that holy fire,
And come, avoiding Hell, to Swarga's peace.
This, of thy three boons, is the next I ask."

P. Rightly thou readest! Yama answereth him:

S. PRA TÊ BRAVÎMI—"I shall tell thee! hear!
I know that holy fire, and how it springs.
The splendour of it shineth through all worlds,
Possessing them! the strength of it upholds
The Universe! Its spark is hidden close
Inside the inmost man, in the hollow heart."
(Guru! what meaneth he?)

P. He meaneth this:
"The spirit of a man, whereby he strives,
Flashes from star to star—if so it will—
And—if it will—sleeps in the smallest drop
Of the midmost heart-blood." Yama sayeth so.

S. Yet, Pundit, this is hard to comprehend!
How can it be that what hath plenitude
To range from star to star should hide itself
I' the hollow of a heart?

P. I answer thee
Out of the great Upanishad, surnamed
Khândogya! Gather me up yon fruit
Dropped by the parrots from the Banyan!
What seest thou therein?

S. A scarlet fig
Not larger than the Moulvie's praying bead!

P. Break it, and say again!

S. I break it, sir,
And see a hundred little yellow seeds!

P. Break it, and say again!

S. I break a seed;
It is as slight as though a silkworm's egg
Were crushed; and in the midst a germ, a speck!

P. Break it, and say again!

S. The speck is gone
In touching, Guru! there is nothing, now!

P. Yet, in that "nothing" lay (thou knowest well!)
The Nyagrodha tree, the Banyan tree,
Comely and vast as it was formed to grow;
With all its thousand downward-dropping stems
Waiting to fall from all its thousand boughs,
And all its lakhs on lakhs of lustrous leaves
Waiting to push to sunlight, and so make
New canopies of flower and fruit and shade
Where creatures of the field, fowls of the air,
Monkey and squirrel-folk might find their home,

And man and cattle 'neath its ample roof
Have shelter from the noon. This Forest-King—
Of bulk to overspread a Raja's camp—
Was wrapped in what thou sayest passeth sight!
Art thou not answered?

S. I am answered, sir!

LOKÂDIMAGNINTAMUVACHA, next,
TASMAI YÂ ISHTAKÂ: "Then Yama told
What fire that is, which was the first thing made,
When anything was made; and how the stones
Of daily acts are laid to build its shrine;
How 'tis enkindled, and how fed;—which words
In like mode Nachikêtas after him
Duly repeated; till, the lesson learned,
Death spake again, soft-smiling—yea! Death said,
The dread, kind god: 'See! I have taught thee this,
And after thee henceforward shall be named
That fire by all men. Also take this chain
Of many colours!'" (What chain meaneth he?)

P. I know not! None well knoweth! 'tis forgot,
Or never told us from the ancient times.

S. "Whoso performs," the King of Death went on,
"Three times this Nachikêtas sacrifice,
Having by three been taught, doing three works,
Conquers those three—the Birth, the Life, the Death!
Who feeds that flame—from Brahma sprung—divine,
Worthy of praise, light-giving—comes to peace
Endless and pure. Who, knowing it threefold,
Offers it thrice—I say—fears not my noose
Cast round his body—dies rejoicingly,
And passeth to the peace of Swargalôk!"
(Guru! which "threefold works"? what "teachers three?")

P. The threefold works are surely, Sacrifice,
Reading the Veds, and Liberality.
The threefold Teachers are the Mother, first,
And next the Father, and the Guru third.
ESHA TE AGNIRNACHIKÊT—proceed!

S. "This is the holy flame, to hear whereof
Thou, Nachikêtas, for thy second boon
Didst choose—so shall men name it! Now, thy third?"

"There is this doubt," young Nachikêtas said:

"Thou dost give peace—is that peace Nothingness?
Some say that after death the soul still lives,
Personal, conscious; some say, 'Nay, it ends!'
Fain would I know which of these twain be true,
By thee enlightened. Be my third boon this."

Then Yama answered, "This was asked of old,
Even by the gods! This is a subtle thing
Not to be told, hard to be understood!
Ask me some other boon: I may not grant!
Choose wiser, Nachikêtas; force me not
To quit this debt—release me from my bond!"

Then, still again spake Nachikêtas: "Aye!
The gods have asked this question; but oh, Death!
Albeit thou sayest it is a subtle thing,
Not to be told, hard to be understood,
Yet know I none can answer like to thee,
And no boon like to this abides to ask.
I crave this boon!"

P. Mark, now, how Yama strives
To keep his mighty secret; ŚATÂYUSH
PUTRAPAUTRÂN VRINISHWA, runs it not?
HASTI HIRANYAMAŚWÂN?

S. Sir, 'tis so!

"Choose," spake he, "sons and grandsons, who shall thrive
A hundred years; choose for them countless herds—
Elephants, horses, gold! Carve out thy lands
In kingdoms for them. Nay, or be thyself
A king again on earth, reigning as long
As life shall satisfy. And, further, add
Unto these gifts whatever else thou wilt,
Health, wisdom, happiness—the rule of the world,
And I will fill the cup of thy desires!
Whatso is hard to gain and dear to keep
In the eyes of men, ask it of me, and have!
Beautiful, fond companions, fair as those
That ride the cars of Indra, singing sweet
To instruments of heavenly melody,
Lovelier than mortal eye hath gazed upon:
Have these, have heaven within their clinging arms!
I give them—I give all; save this one thing;
Ask not of Death, what cometh after death!"

P. MARAṆAN MÂNUPRAKSHÎ—yes, 'tis there!

"Question not Death of Death"—yet who else knows?

What sayeth Nachikêtas now?

S. He saith

ŚWÔ BHÂWÂ—"Things that die to-morrow be
Those glories of the senses! Oh, thou God,
That endest men! our longest life is brief!
The horses, and the elephants, and thrones,
The sweet companions, and the song and dance,
Are thine, and end in thee! Gold buys not bliss!
If we have wealth, we see thee near, and know
We live but till thou willest! Let my boon
Be as I asked—that, and not otherwise!
Ah! in our sad world dwelling how should man,
Who feels himself day after day decline,
Day after day decay—till death's day come;
Who sees how beauty fades, and fond love fails,
Be glad to live a little longer span,
For so much longer anguish? Nay! my boon!
Tell me, great Yama! what the true word is
In this which men inquire, the very truth
Of this chief question, of the life to come,

If there be life! if the soul's self lives on!
Nought else asks Nachikêtas, only that
Which hath been hidden, and which no man knows;
Which no man knows." (Oh, Guru! will he tell?)

HERE ENDS THE FIRST VALLÎ OF THE
KAṬHA UPANISHAD.

SECOND VALLI.

Saheb. Then Yama yielded, granting the great boon,
And spake: "Know, first of all, that what is Good,
And what is Pleasant—these be separate!
By many ways, in diverse instances
Pleasure or Good lay hold upon each man!
Blessed is he who, choosing high, lets go
Pleasure for Good. The Pleasure-seekers lose
Life's end, so lived."

"The Pleasant and the Good
Solicit men; the Sage, distinguishing
By understanding, followeth the Good,
Being more excellent. The foolish man
Cleaveth to pleasure, seeking still to have,
To keep, enjoy."

"But, disregarding these,
The dreams of sick desire, long line of years,

Sons, dominations, tender lures of love,
Glory, and greatness—thou didst put aside
What all men crave, oh, Nachikêtas! Thou
Scorned'st to tread the path of wealth, wherein
The foolish perish."

"Wide asunder stand
Wisdom and ignorance; in sundering ways
They lead mankind! I judge thee wholly given
To wisdom, seeing all these joys of sense
Persuaded not."

"The foolish ones who live
In ignorance, holding themselves as wise
And well-instructed, tread the round of change
With erring steps, deluded, like the blind
Led by the blind!"

(Oh, Master! how should one
Wilfully fail of wisdom? What is this?
Needs must we love to know, if we may know!)

P. He speaketh of the deeper knowledge here,
The higher ignorance! If one should con
Whatever East and West have won of lore,
And deem he knoweth Truth, holding this world

For true;—that man is ignorant, and dies
To live again, until he learn to die
The death which frees from living. Wise men say
(Kêna Upanishad that high verse holds!)
"He is unknown to whoso think they know,
And known to whoso know they know him not."

S. I thank thee, Pundit! Now the holy text
Seemeth to read—

"The necessary road
Which brings to life unchanging is not seen
By such! wealth dazzles heedless hearts! deceived
With shows of sense they deem their world is real,
And the unseen is nought; so, constantly,
Fall they beneath my stroke!"

"To reach to Being
Beyond all seeming Being; to know true life
This is not gained by many; seeing that few
So much as hear of it, and of those few
The more part understand not. Brahma's Truth
Is wonderful to tell, splendid to see,
Delightful, being perceived, when the wise teach."
(Teach me a little, here, what Brahma is!)

P. I tell thee from the Śwêtaśwatara!
"HE, Who, Alone, Undifferenced, unites
With Nature, making endless difference,
Producing and receiving all which seems,
Is Brahma! May he give us light to know!"
"He is the Unseen Spirit which informs
All subtle essences! He flames in fire,
He shines in Sun and Moon, Planets and Stars!
He bloweth with the winds, rolls with the waves,
He is Prajâpati, that fills the worlds!"
"He is the man and woman, youth and maid!
The babe new-born, the withered ancient, propped
Upon his staff! He is whatever is,—
The black bee, and the tiger, and the fish,
The green bird with red eyes, the tree, the grass,
The cloud that hath the lightning in its womb,
The seasons, and the seas! By Him they are,
In Him begin and end." Now, read thou on.

S. "The uttermost true soul is ill-perceived
By him, who, unenlightened, sayeth, 'I,
Am I; thou, thou; and life divided!' He

That knoweth life undifferenced, declares
The Spirit, what it is, One with the All.
And this is Truth! But nowise shall the Truth
Be compassed, if thou speak of small and great!"

"Excellent youth! the knowledge thou didst crave
Comes not with speech: [words are the false world's signs!]
By insight surely comes it, if one hears
True teachers teach the Life undifferenced.
Lo! thou hast loved the Truth, and striven for it.
I would that others, Nachikêtas, strove!"

"Yea, boy, as thou didst know, the joys of sense
Are vain; since lasting good may not be won
From the Impermanent. Therefore that fire,
Divinely kindled in the hollow heart,
Burns down at length. Thou seek'st the Permanent!"

Thou, Nachikêtas!—by my second boon,
Didst comprehend the fruit of sacrifice,
The Rest where all desires are somewhile fed;
Where the world's centre is; where fear departs;
Laudable, lovely, high, of large expanse;
Desirable, the glad abode of Bliss.
Thou sawest these and sett'dst them aside,

Wise in thy fixedness!"

"Only the wise

By ADHYÂTMAYÔGA—severing

Their thoughts from shows, and fixing it on truths,

See HIM, the Perfect and Unspeakable,

Hard to be seen, retreating, ever hid

Deeper and deeper in the Uttermost;

Whose House was never entered, who abides

Now, and before, and always; and, so seeing,

Are freed from griefs and pleasures!"

"Hearing this,

Conceiving verity,—desiring it,

Distinguishing the soul's deep attributes

Subtly-discerned, far-reaching—mortal man

Rejoiceth, having noble cause for joy.

And thee, oh Nachikêtas, I perceive

A heart whose door stands open for the Truth!"

P. Good! 'tis the sense; albeit once and twice

Thy feet did stray, treading this lofty path

Of learning, faintly-traced. Now shall the boy

Press Yama closer, and the Truth will come!"

ANYATRA DHARMMÔDANYATRÂDHARMM—

ÂDANYATRÂSMÂTKRITÂKRITÂT

ANYATRA BHUTÂCHCH BHAVYÂCHCH,—TAD VAD !

What saith he ?

S. "Make it known to me," he saith,
"Who is HE ? What ? Whom thou hast knowledge of
Higher than Good and Ill, Unseen, Exempt
From causes and effects ; Outside the sphere
Of that which was or will be ; More than these
Mightier, remoter, deeper ! "

Yama spake :

"The answer whereunto all Vedas lead ;
The answer whereunto all Penance strives ;
The answer whereunto those strain that live
As Brahmacharyas—hear this from me."

. . . . . .

What did he whisper, Guru ?

P. Doubt thou not,
He breathed the holy ÔM. Yet if Death spake
That sacred word so softly, let us not
Exceed the reverent text, which in this place
Hath a great silence ! But the God saith more,
ETADDEVÂKSHARAMPARAN ;—Read on !

S. "This word, so rightly breathed, signifieth Brahm,
And signifieth Brahma. GOD withdrawn,
And GOD made manifest. Who knows this word,
With all its purports, what his heart would have
His heart possesseth. This of spoken speech
Is wisest, deepest, best, supremest! He
That speaketh it, and wotteth what he speaks,
Is worshipped in the place of Brahm with Brahm!
Also, the soul which knoweth thus itself,
It is not born. It doth not die. It sprang
From none, and it begetteth none! Unmade,
Immortal, changeless, primal,—I can break
The body, but that soul I cannot harm!"

P. Now is the next verse famous!—mark it well.
The inmost secret of thy scroll lies here.
Here shalt thou pluck from this most ancient shell
The whitest pearl of wisdom's treasury!
Moreover, in the "Song of God" 'tis set,
And shineth in the *Śwêtaśwatara.*

S. HANTÂ CHENMANYATÊ HANTUN
HATASCHENMANYATE HATAN,
UBHAU TAU NA VIJNYÂNITQ

NAYAM HANTI NA HANYATÊ.

"If he that slayeth thinks 'I slay;' if he
Whom he doth slay, thinks 'I am slain,' then both
Know not aright! That which was life in each
Cannot be slain, nor slay!"

"The untouched Soul,
Greater than all the worlds [because the worlds
By it subsist]; smaller than subtleties
Of things minutest; last of ultimates,
Sits in the hollow heart of all that lives!
Whoso hath laid aside desire and fear,
His senses mastered, and his spirit still,
Sees in the quiet light of verity
Eternal, safe, majestical—HIS SOUL!"

"Resting, it ranges everywhere! asleep,
It roams the world, unsleeping! Who, save I,
Know that divinest spirit, as it is,
Glad beyond joy, existing outside life?"

"Beholding it in bodies bodiless,
Amid impermanency permanent,
Embracing all things, yet i' the midst of all,
The mind, enlightened, casts its grief away!"

"It is not to be known by knowledge! man
Wotteth it not by wisdom! learning vast
Halts short of it! Only by soul itself
Is soul perceived—when the Soul wills it so!
There shines no light save its own light to show
Itself unto itself!"

"None compasseth
Its joy who is not wholly ceased from sin,
Who dwells not self-controlled, self-centred—calm,
Lord of himself! It is not gotten else!
Brahm hath it not to give!"

"How otherwise
Should mortal know where that sure Life abides
Whereto Brahmans and Kshattriyas are but meats
And Death the garnishing?

(The *Vallî* ends!
Ah, Master! what is this which Yama saith?)

P. KA ITṬHA VEDA YATRA SA? The scroll
Rebuketh thee! "Who grasps HIM?" Meditate!
There shines no light, save the Soul's light, to show!
Save the Soul's light!—

END OF THE SECOND VALLÎ.

THE THIRD VALLÎ.

Saheb. "So Yama spake; and Nachikêtas, then—
With soul and spirit drinking due result
Of this world's works—approached the Hidden House
Where the SUPREME abides:"

"Knowers of Brahm,
Performers of the three-fold sacrifice,
And they that light the Nachikêtas fire,
Call soul and spirit—ever this way linked—
Sunshine and shadow:"

"Now is understood
That Nachikêtas-flame which builds the bridge
For sacrificers; whereby these attain
The Eternal ONE, the Place of Peace, the Abode
Where fear and grief are fled; the Landing-port
For spirits which have crossed life's troubled sea."

"Look on the Spirit as the rider! take

The Body for the chariot, and the Will
As charioteer! regard the mind as reins,
The senses as the steeds; and things of sense
The ways they trample on. So is the Soul
The Lord that owneth spirit, body, will,
Mind, senses—all; itself unowned. Thus think
The wise!"

"He, who is unwise, drives with reins
Slack on the neck o' the senses; then they ramp,
Like restive horses of a charioteer."

"He that is wise, with watchful mind and firm,
Calms those wild Five, so they go fair and straight,
Like well-trained horses of a charioteer."

"The man unwise, unmindful, evil-lived,
Comes not to that fixed Place of Peace; he falls
Back to the region of sense-life again!"

"The wise and mindful one, heart-purified,
Attaineth to the changeless Place, wherefrom
Never again shall births renew for him!"

"For whoso rides this chariot of the flesh—
The reins of mind well grasped; the charioteer
Faithful and firm—comes to his journey's end,

Vishnu's abiding-seat; the Utmost Home."
(I would hear farther, Guru! of that Home!)

P. Hear what is taught in the Khândogya!
"The body is the City, and its heart
The Palace, and the Royal Presence there
A hid, invisible, close, subtle thing,
On an ethereal lotus-seat enthroned,
The Spirit—ÂTMAN!"

"And if they shall say
'How should we seek, how should we understand
That kingly spirit, sitting on the Throne,
Hid in the Palace of the Body's Heart,
Invisible, small, subtle?'

"Answer them—
'As large as is the unbounded Universe,
So large that little, hidden Spirit is!
The Heavens and Earths are in it! Fire and air,
And sun and moon and stars; darkness and light,
It comprehends! Whatever maketh Man,
The present of him, and the past of him,
And what shall be of him;—all thoughts and things
Lie folded in the ethereal vast of It!'"

"And, if they say, 'What then is left of it
When eld upon the Body's City creeps,
And breaks and scatters it; and all its walls
Fall; and the Palace of the Heart is void,
Where dwelt the being, the desire, the life,
This Royal Spirit's kingship?'"

"Answer them:
'By mortal years the Immortal grows not old!
The Âtman changes not! The Body's death
Kills not the soul! It hath its City, still,
Its Palace, and its hidden, proper life!
Becoming Self of Self; set clear from sin,
As the snake casts her slough; made free of flesh,
Of age, ache, hunger, thirst, sorrow, and death:
Thenceforth desiring the desirable,
And thinking ever what is good to think!'"

S. Sayeth thy scripture this?

P. Aye! this it saith!—
Prapâthaka the Eighth, Khanda the First;—
And in the Second: "If a soul depart
Instructed—knowing itself—and knowing truth;—
And how that Brahma and the Self are One—

Then hath it freedom over all the worlds:
And, if it wills the Region of the Past,
The Fathers and the Mothers of the Past
Come to receive it; and that Soul is glad!
And if it wills the region of the Homes,
The Brothers and the Sisters of the Homes
Come to receive it, and that Soul is glad!
And if it wills the region of the Friends,
The Well-belovëd come to welcome it
With love undying, and that Soul is glad!
And if it wills a world of grace and peace
Where garlands are, and perfumes, and delights
Of delicate meats and drinks, music and song,
Lo! fragrances, and blossoms, and delights
Of dainty banquets, and the streams of song
Come perfect to it, and that Soul is glad:
And if it make its bliss in beauty's arms,
Finding most wonder, most release, most rest
On the soft bosoms of the Maids of Heaven,
Lo! the bright Maids of Heaven—more loving-sweet
Than loveliest earthly beauty—come to him
Rejoiced—rejoicing! And that Soul is glad!"

S. How should the Âtman, Guru! this glad soul
Mix, and be one with Brahma—being itself?

P. "There is an answer in the Upanishads!
'How should this stream—our Moota-Moola here—
Which presently is Beema, and anon
Kistna, and falleth so into the sea,
Be river and be sea? Yet thus it is!
The great Godâveri, who pours herself
Into the Lanka waves—is she destroyed?
Has Gunga vanished, when her sacred tides
Slacken against the main? or Brahmapût?
Or Indus? or the five white sister-floods
Which, by the mouth of Indus, find escape?
Lo! these live still—though none may know of them—
Each drop and air-bell of their inland course
Existent in the vast dark water-world!'
Thus it is taught;—but not with mortal words
Shall wordless truth be compassed!"

S. Reverently
I thank thee, Shastri! I will read again?
"Listen! the things of sense are more than sense!
The mind is higher still! the moving will

Higher than mind! the Spirit higher yet!"
"And higher than the Spirit is the Soul,
Highest of all the all-embracing ONE,
PURUSHA! Over, or beyond, is naught!—
Innermost, Utmost, Infinite, is This!"
"This is that Ultimate and Uttermost
Which shall not be beheld, being in all
The unbeholden essence! Not the less
Will it reveal itself by subtle light
Of insight, straitly seeking hidden truth!"
"If one will see it, let him rule the flesh
By mind, governing mind with ordered Will,
Subduing Will by Knowledge, making this
Serve the firm Spirit, and the Spirit cling
As Soul to the Eternal Changeless Soul;
So shall he see!"
"UTTISHTAT!—Rise! Awake!
Seek the great Teachers, and attend! The road
Is narrow as a knife-edge! hard to tread!"
"But whoso once perceiveth HIM that Is;—
Without a name, Unseen, Impalpable,
Bodiless, Undiminished, Unenlarged,

To senses Undeclared, without an end,
Without beginning, Timeless, Higher than height,
Deeper than depth! Lo! such an one is saved!
Death hath not power upon him!"

"Ye who read,
And ye who hear, these never-dying words
Which Nachikêtas won, and Death vouchsafed,
Rejoice! for ye are loved in Brahma's world!"
"Whoso—pure-hearted—the deep lore of this
Expoundeth, in th' assembly, or at time
Of Śraddha (let it otherwise be hid)!
Thereby obtaineth endless fruit of bliss,
Yea! endless fruit of bliss!"

"Yea! endless fruit!"
Murmured the Pundit, while, rejoiced, I made
The eight prostrations;—for what greatness is
Greater than wisdom? Then I called my horse,

Whose hoofs upon the rock the black snake heard
And glided to his darkness; but the doves
Brooded and cooed, and Morning's lovely light
Lay broad and glad and white upon the grain
What time we cantered back to Vishrambagh.

HERE ENDS THE THIRD VALLÎ OF THE
KATHA UPANISHAD.

HERO AND LEANDER.

[From the Greek of Musæus.]

"Αύχνον, ἔρωτος ἄγαλμα, γαμοστόλον ἄστρον ἔρωτος."

SING, Muse! the signal lamp gleaming above
That lit the nightly swimmer to his Love;
The unseen pathway of the silent tide
That bore the bridegroom to his watchful bride;
The salt-soaked marriage robes, the moist embrace;
Abydos' town, and Sestos, Hero's place;
Longing Leander, on the black waves' crest,
Eyeing the light that led to Hero's breast;
Kind light—Love's jewel!—which the mighty Jove
Might well have taken to the orbs above,
And set it shining in the spangled sky
To be Love's star of all Heaven's company;

Seeing it was the planet of their bliss,
The glittering summons to the sleepless kiss,
Till the hard tempest ended him and this:
Help, then, high Muse! and teach me how to sing
Leander's death, and lamp's extinguishing!

Sestos and white Abydos—cities twain—
Fronted each other over Helle's main;
And there God Eros, setting notch to string,
Wounded two bosoms with one shaft-shooting,
A maiden's and a youth's—Leander he,
And lovely Hero, Sestos' sweetest, she;
She of her town, and he of his the boast;
A noble pair! If ever to that coast
Thou wendest, ask for Hero's tower, and come
Where she Love's lighthouse nightly did illume;
Inquire for white Abydos, too, and muse
Where young Leander life and love did lose;
But now to tell how he fair Hero loved,
And how the maid to dote on him was moved.

Honey-sweet Hero, of a princely race,
Was priestess to Queen Venus in that place;

And at her father's tower, by the sea set—
Herself a Queen of Love, though maiden yet—
Dwelt; yet, for modesty and gracious shame,
She never to the city markets came;
Nor mingled at the vintage in the dance,
Lest envious eyes upon her path should glance;—
For evil ones will flout at fairer faces;—
But ever, in the holy temple-spaces,
She worshipped foam-born Venus, Queen above,
And Eros eke, the tiny Lord of Love,
Beseeching that she might unscathëd go;
Yet none the more 'scaped she delicious woe!

It was the time of the great offering
Made with high pomp at Sestos in the spring
To Venus and Adonis, and each year
A merry crowd did come from far and near
To keep this feast: all they that have their home
Upon the rounded islets ringed with foam
In Marmora and westward;—Hœmony,
And Cyprus, sent them, and the Cretan sea;

Cythera, Phrygia, Libanus;—with these
The nigher towns and cities swarmed like bees
To see the show; but most of all the youth:—
Ever they throng where feasts are!—to tell truth,
'Tis not, methinks, the shrine which draws them so,—
To see the maidens those light pilgrims go!

And Hero, eke, went up unto the shrine,
Her face of alabaster all a-shine
Like the pure moon when first it swims the sky;
Nathless her cheek was touched with tender dye
Such as new rose-buds have—not white nor red,
But sunlit-snow: in sooth you would have said
She was all made of rose-leaves, she did show
So fair and fine under her thin gown's flow,
Such rose-leaf arms! such roseate shoulders!—see!
Of old, they said, the Graces were but three;
Yet each sweet charm of Hero, as it seemed,
With love-spells of a hundred Graces gleamed.
Well was she worthy to be Venus' maid!

And even as she walked—stately and staid,

Liker a goddess than a priestess, fair
Beyond the fairest—Hero, unaware,
Took all eyes after her: no youth that day
But his heart beat as Hero passed that way,
Wishing such heavenly beauty his might be.
Thus, up the steps to the great Temple she
Drew still the looks, the thoughts, the sighs of men;
And one among the strangers whispered then:—

"Gods!—Helen's town I've seen, and Sparta's dames,
Whose charms make wars and give the world to flames;
But never saw I one that could compare
With form so goddess-like and face so rare;—
Queen Venus sure hath made the youngest Grace
Her minister this morn! oh, happy place
Which owns her! I could gaze until I die!
Would Zeus but grant me Hero, not his sky
Could tempt me to a wish! I would not be
A God, so Hero were but wife to me
Since she is sacred and past mortal prayer,
Heaven send me soon a woman half as fair!"

Thus he; and others passioned otherwise,
Heart-stricken by the light of Hero's eyes.

But thou, Leander! when those bright eyes shone
One instant on thee, of the youths alone,—
Beyond wild words, beyond fond wishes—felt
The heart within thee with love's magic melt.
Others to win her wafted many a sigh,
He alone knew that he must have or die.
In one brief glance love's lightning-flash did smite
All senses senseless with strange deep delight,
Left thrilling when her silken lashes sank,
And veiled the perilous glory his eyes drank.
What lightning strikes, in sooth, like a fair face?
What arrow pierces like a woman's grace?
'Tis the eyes slay, thence fly the subtle darts
Which deal swift wounds and hurt unguarded hearts.
So with Leander; in his bosom strove
Passion with shame, and fear with forward love:
He trembled, and then blushed to tremble so;
And vexed at blushing, straight did venturous
grow;

Eros at his heart's ear whispering amain
To lay shame by and speak: so was he fain
To steal a little closer, till he stood
Foot to foot with her: then in daring mood
Sidelong he glanced and murmured half a word,
And checked it to a sigh, itself half heard:
Glance, word, and sigh so tender-timid were,
Their silent speaking could not anger her;
Nay, but it pleased! that gentle stratagem
To tell the love which burned so plain in him;
And seeming to see naught, she saw, and bent
Her sweet head from him—not in discontent;
And seeming not to hear, she heard, and sighed
A little silver sigh of pleasured pride;
By signs unwitting giving him to know
It was not anger set her cheeks a-glow;
Then turned, ashamed of nothing;—but the boy
Knew that she knew, and all his heart was joy.

So, while he lingered, one slight word to win,
Day—nigh to setting—drew her splendours in;

And shadow-loving Hesperus shone high,
Faint-seen upon the violet eastern sky:
Whereat,—the merry crowd thickening for home—
With desperate courage closer hath he come;
So close, he touched her rosy opened hand,
Heaving a deep sigh, plain to understand;
And she, as one an angered, drew it in,
But so that he might see 'twas no great sin;
Then, bolder, by her stole he took the maid,
And drew imploring towards the Temple's shade;
Whereat, with pretty frown and faltering feet,
She followed, while she said, with chiding sweet:

"Sir, are you mad? how dare you hold me so?
Leave plucking at my gown, and let me go!
If those who loved me saw, 'twould cost you dear;
Besides, I am a holy priestess here,
Vowed to Queen Venus! are you not afraid
To stay me so, and I, an honest maid?"

Thus, as the manner of all maidens is
Her soft lips rated, though her heart was his;

And he by love's quick instinct knew it so,
And let her dear delicious accents flow
In anger musical, for when maids scold'
With looks that pardon, lovers may be bold:
But when she ceased, and stood, he bent his head
Close to her pearly fragrant nape, and said,
With lips which trembled like his trembling heart,

"Oh, Maid! — oh, Marvel! — if of earth thou art,
And not a goddess, not divine—to me
Pallas or Cytheræa thou might'st be!
Art thou not sprung indeed of heavenly birth?
Scarce dare I deem thee denizen of earth!
But if of earth, ah, me! how godlike then
He who begot thee, of all mortal men!
How happy beyond happy mothers she
Who bore and nursed thee, sweet one, on her knee;
And if of earth—oh! be of earth, and hear
My pleading lips, my earnest humble prayer!
Since thou art Venus' priestess, then take heed
Thou vex her not with cruel word and deed;

Be what thou seem'st by reverencing this shrine,
The glory of thy Goddess should be thine;
She liketh not a votary cold and coy—
Love is her worship, and her service joy:
If thou would'st keep her tender, high decree,
My earnest passion should not anger thee,
Being so born for worship: therefore thou,
If thou lov'st Venus, listen to me now.
Dear servant of this temple—I am thine!
As thou dost pray, I pray; ah! then, incline—
As thou dost ask thy goddess—pitying ears
Unto this suppliant sad with hopes and fears,
Wounded by love, and captive at thy feet,
As when, with wand of gold, Hermes the fleet
Brought Hercules—the strongest that could be—
Meek to the footstool of Queen Omphalë.
Me Aphrodite, and not Hermes, sent;
Think how thy goddess made that one repent,
Arcadian Atalanta, she who vowed
To die a maid, rejecting—cold and proud—
Hippomenes; and yet it did befall
She grew to love him—heart, soul, mind, and all;

Yea! even to frenzy—whom she did not love:
Oh, Sweet! be wise, nor Venus' anger move."

So, with soft flood of loving argument,
From coy reserve to yielding thoughts he bent
The maiden's mind; but she, as maidens will,
Albeit convinced at heart, stood speechless still;
Her lustrous eyes upon the ground fast set,
And hot face turned to hide the blush on it.
Now with one sandal-tip the grass she beat,
Now drew it back, close-wrapped from head to feet,
Nought answering; yet all these were signs to bless,
And silence—well he knew—is woman's yes;
She, too, was hurt with Eros' fatal dart;
His soft flame flickered in her virgin heart;
Spite of herself it fluttered with delight
To mark how fair he was—how bold—how bright;
And while her eyes stole from the ground to his,
And back again, he stood 'tween woe and bliss,
Devouring still, with gaze she did not check,
The flower-bright flushing of her face and neck;

Till at the last she found some breath to speak,
While, pearl by pearl, tears glimmered down her cheek:

"Friend! were I marble, I must answer thee.
Who taught thee such deep eloquence? Ah, me!
Who brought thee hither, and procured us pain?
For all these sweet things said are said in vain.
How should a stranger—never seen or known—
Win me in marriage—if I would be won?
Thou could'st not ask me openly for wife,
My parents would not give me; and 'twere rife
With untold dangers if you lingered here
To meet me secretly; for all is ear,
All eye, in Sestos! Things in silence done
Are said next morning at the market-stone.
But tell me—and tell true!—what town is thine,
And whence thy birth and name? Thou knowest mine,
Hero of Sestos; yonder is my home,
In that tall tower whose foot stands in the foam;
And there I dwell alone—but for one slave—
Outside the walls, over the breaking wave;

Having no neighbour but the rolling sea!
No song but his rude music! none to be
Friend or companion! all the seasons there
The thunder of the mournful main I hear."

So much she said; then stayed herself, and drew
The gown before her cheek to hide its hue,
And chid herself for speaking, sore ashamed:
But he—rejoiced because her words proclaimed
Hope of the prize—went meditating hard
How he should run to win the dear reward.
For Love hath many wiles to heal the heart
Of those that bleed with his unshunnëd dart;
And, of himself, will counsel oft afford
To those of whom th' Almighty Boy is Lord:
So to Leander's heart he whispered low
A way to bliss, albeit the end was woe.

"Sweet! for thy love," he cried, "the sea I'd
cleave,
Though foam were fire, and waves with flame did
heave,

I fear not billows if they bear to thee;
Nor tremble at the hissing of the sea!
And I will come — oh! let me come — each night,
Swimming the swift flood to my dear delight:
For white Abydos, where I live, doth front
Thy city here, across our Hellespont.
Do but this thing, set thine own lamp on high,
To shine at evening through the darkling sky,
And I will be Love's ship—my pilot-star
That beam, whereto, oaring my way afar,
I shall not see Boötes, nor his wain,
And bright Orion will be bright in vain.
Only take heed, Dear, of the winds, and shield
The light, that when I toil, by waves concealed,
It be not quenched by any envious blast,
Lest I go down—a ship and venture lost:
Sweetheart! do this: my name if thou dost sue,
I am Leander, Hero's lover true."

Nothing she answered, save by one soft kiss,
Which sealed the contract of their sudden bliss;

Then lip to lip they plighted faith for life,
He to be husband leal, she loving wife,
Albeit unwed; and also did agree
That she should light the lamp, he swim the sea.
All which deep bargain being got by heart,
With lingering words and looks they tore apart,—
She to her tower; he, through the gathering gloom,
Noting the landmarks, joyfully is come
Down to the beach, and ships 'mid th' others there
For white Abydos, with its ramparts fair;
Then waits till night gives him his new-won bride,
And Hero watches on the other side.

Soon o'er the sky Eve's purple curtains creep,
To all but young Leander bringing sleep:
He, when the darkness deepened, eager stood
Beside the white marge of the rolling flood,
His eyes quick-searching through the hollow night,
To see the first flash of his lady's light;
Far-shining light, that gleams to make him blest!
Dear light, that guides to Hero's beating breast!

She, when the darkness covered land and sea,
Kindled her lamp, and set it. Instantly
Love with that spark lighted Leander's soul;
Eager he hailed the beam; yet loud did roll
The thundering breakers on the shingly shore;—
The first wave something chilled;—but love is more
Than fear; he laid his outer garb aside,
And spake unto himself by the cold tide:

"Awful is love, and dreadful is the sea,
But fire is more than water unto me;
And this that burns is stronger than much brine:
Think most of Eros, foolish heart of mine!
Care not for tumbling billows; let us go
Straight over them to Hero; why shrink so?
Hast thou forgotten that Queen Venus came
Forth from the floods, and ever rules the same?"

Then, with both hands, from off his fair, smooth skin
He stripped his cloth, and tied his long locks in;
And ran upon the reef, and sprang, and clove
The keen salt waves. So, swimming to his love,

He steered with face set hard where that ray shone,
Ship—pilot—rower—merchant, all in one!

Hero, the while, upon her turret-stair,
Guarded the beacon-lamp from every air;
Spreading her gown that side and this, to keep
The breezes off; but when, up from the deep,
Leander, breathless, came safe to the strand,
Down flew she to the sea-gate—caught his hand—
In gladness past all words, her white arms flung
Round him, and on his heaving bosom hung;
And led him from the cold and foamy beach
Up to her tower; and when her room they reach,
She wiped his pearly body clean of brine,
And took the salt smell off with unguents fine,
Stained with rose-essences and scented rare,
And then she clothed him in her long dark hair,
Yet panting from his voyage; while in his ear
She poured these dulcet accents:—

"Husband dear!
Sore thou hast toiled, as never one save thee,
Battling the horrid deep, to come to me;

Forget upon my lips the wave's harsh taste,
The fierce sea-monsters and the roaring waste;
The port is reached! Anchor, dear ship! and have
The goods you sailed for in your Hero's love."

With that soft leave he loosed her virgin zone,
And took her—pure and perfect—for his own.
No marriage-rite, no festal-dance was there,
None raised the hymn to Herë for the pair;
No nuptial-torches blazed around the bed,
The merry long procession was not led;
No sire the hymenæal blessing spoke,
No tender mother "Hymen" did invoke;
But Silence spread their wedding-couch; and she
Drew the close curtains of their ecstasy;
The Night wore all her starry gems of pride,
To be bridesmaiden to that peerless bride;
Hesper kept watch, and lingered over long,
Lest Dawn should find him there, and do them wrong.
Dawn never found Leander! ere 'twas grey
To still Abydos' walls he made his way,

Full of love's comfort, but insatiate yet;
While Hero in her turret did forget
All things save him—in that one day of life
Changed soul and body, grown from maid to wife;
And mightily did each on either shore
Pray dusk to come and daylight to be o'er.

Thus many a summer night they met unseen,
And had great bliss of love from Venus queen:
But no joy long endureth, and not long
Lived theirs, the gentle lovers of my song;
For Winter came apace, with snow and frost,
And wild storms whistling up and down the coast:
Lashed to its depths the tortured ocean shrank,
While the wind drove its billows, rank on rank,
Scourging their crests milk-white; all sailors then
Drew up their ships upon the shore, for men
Fear the fierce winter and the furious sea;
But no fear, young Leander, hindered thee!
As oft as Hero showed the guiding light,
So oft, through storm, and foam, and murky night,

Swam he with steadfast passion to that guide,
Daring the dangers of the sweeping tide.
Ah! Hero, wherefore call o'er such a sea?
Too fond thou wert; too bold and faithful he!
Thou should'st have left unlit thy lamp of love,
And waited till kind Spring made green the grove;
But love and fate compelled her! so, o'ercome,
She set her light, and lured him to his doom.

There came one night, the wildest of the year,
When the wind smote like edge of hissing spear,
And the pale breakers thundered on the beach,
While in mid-sea Leander toiled to reach
The far-off haven of his Hero's breast.
Sore-tossed he was from raging crest to crest;
Billow on billow rolled, the great seas roared
Furiously leaping to the clouds, which poured
Sleet and brine back, with screams of storms that met
Midway from all the quarters:—Eurus set
His blast against the West Wind; Notus blew
His cheeks to bursting, Boreas to subdue:

Ceaseless the tumult of the tempest was,
And young Leander in its midst, alas!
Battling th' inexorable bitter sea,
Called on the gods in his calamity.
To foam-born Venus many a prayer he made,
And oft the name of great Poseidon said;
And oft grim Boreas he did implore
For Orithyia's sake to help him o'er.
Nothing he gained! Fate was too strong for Love!
The chill spray-laden storm beat him above;
Below, the monstrous buffets of the sea
Struck the strength from him; till, all helplessly,
His feet drooped down, relinquishing the strife,
Though his tired hands kept feebly on for life.
O'er lip and nostril now the salt waves clomb;
Gasping for breath, he breathed but choking foam;
Yet gleamed that light, and still he strove for shore:
Sudden—a cruel gust blew!—all was o'er!
The gust extinguished Hero's lamp; the sea
Hid young Leander and his agony.

Hero, when that he came not, watched all night,
Into the darkness straining hard her sight;
And morning breaking—and no sign of him!
With aching heart she scanned the sea-face dim,
Fearing to look, because that lamp went out.
He was not there! but, casting still about,
Lo!—at the turret's foot his body lay,
Rolled on the stones, and soaked with breaking spray!
She rent her robe upon her, and leaped down
Headlong, distracted, from the turret's crown.
There on his corpse she breathed her dying breath;
And, linked in life, those two were one in death.

"Ἔρως δ' οὐκ ἤρκεσε Μοίρας."

THE EPIC OF THE LION.

[From the French of Victor Hugo's "L'Art d'être Grandpère."]

I.

A LION in his jaws caught up a child—
Not harming it—and to the woodland, wild
With secret streams and lairs, bore off his prey;
The beast, as one might cull a flower in May,
Had plucked this bud, not thinking wrong or right,
Mumbling its stalk, too proud or kind to bite,—
A lion's way, roughly compassionate!
Yet truly dismal was the victim's fate;
Thrust in a cave which rumbled with each roar,
His food wild herbs, his bed the earthy floor,
He lived, half-dead with daily frightening.
It was a rosy boy, son of a king;

A ten-year lad, with bright eyes shining wide;
And save this son his Majesty beside
Had but one girl—two years of age—and so
The monarch suffered, being old, much woe,
His heir the monster's prey, while the whole land
In dread both of the beast and king did stand;
Sore terrified were all:—
By came a Knight
That road, who halted, asking "What's the fright?"
They told him, and he spurred straight for the den:

Oh, such a place! the sunlight entering in
Grew pale—and crept, so grim a sight was shown
Where that gaunt Lion on the rock lay prone:
The wood, at this part thick of growth and wet,
Barred out the sky with black trunks closely set;
Forest and forester matched wondrous well!
Great stones stood near, with ancient tales to tell—
Such as make moorlands weird in Brittany—
And at its edge a mountain you might see,
One of those iron walls which shut off heaven;
The Lion's den was a deep cavern driven

Into this granite ridge, fenced round with oaks:
Cities and caverns are discordant folks,
They bear each other grudges! this did wave
A rustling threat to trespasser,—"Hence, knave!
Or meet my Lion!"
In the champion went!
The den had all the sombre sentiment
Which palaces display—deaths—murderings—
Terrors!—you felt "here dwells one of the kings:
Bones strewn around showed that this mighty lord
Denied himself nought which his woods afford.
A rock-rift, pierced by stroke of lightning, gave
Such misty glimmer as a den need have:
What eagles might think dawn and owls the dusk
Makes day enough for Kings of claw and tusk.
All else was regal, though! you understood
Why the majestic brute slept, as he should,
On leaves, with no lace curtains to his bed;
And how his wine was blood—nay, or instead,
Spring-water lapped *sans* napkin, spoon, or cup,
Or lackeys:—

Being from spur to crest mailed up,
The champion enters.
In the den he spies
Truly a Mighty One! Crowned to the eyes
With shaggy golden fell—the Beast!—It muses
With look infallible; for, if he chooses,
The master of a wood may play at Pope,
And this one showed such claws, there was small hope
To argue with him on a point of creed!
The Knight approached—yet not too fast, indeed!
His footfall clanged, flaunted his rose-red feather;
None the more notice took the beast of either,
Still in his own reflections plunged profound:
Theseus a-marching upon that black ground
Of Sisyphus, Ixion, and dire hell,
Saw such a scene, murk and implacable:
But duty whispered "Forward!" so the Knight
Drew forth his sword: the Lion at that sight
Lifted his head in slow wise, grim to see;

The Knight said: "Greeting! monstrous brute! to thee;

In this foul hole thou hast a child in keeping,—
I search its noisome nooks with glances sweeping,
But spy him not. That child I must reclaim;
Friends are we if thou renderest up the same;
If not—I too am lion, thou wilt find;
The king his lost son in his arms shall bind;
While here thy wicked blood runs, smoking-hot,
Before another dawn."

"I fancy not!"

Pensive, the Lion said.

The Knight strode near,
Brandished his blade and cried: "Sire! have a care!"
The Beast was seen to smile—ominous sight!—
Never make lions smile! Then joined they fight,
The man and monster, in most desperate duel
Like warring giants, angry, huge, and cruel;
Like tigers crimsoning an Indian wood,
The man with steel, the beast with claws as good;
Fang matching blade, hide mail, that sylvan lord
Hurled himself foaming on the flashing sword:
Stout though the Knight, the Lion stronger was,
And tore his brave breast under its cuirass;

And, striking blow on blow with ponderous paw,
Forced plate and rivet off, until you saw
Through all the armour's cracks the bright blood spirt,
As when clenched fingers make a mulberry squirt;
And piece by piece he stripped the iron sheath,
Helm, armlets, greaves—gnawed bare the bones beneath,
Scrunching that hero; till he sprawled—alas!
Beneath his shield, all blood, and mud, and mess:
Whereat the Lion feasted:—then it went
Back to its rocky couch and slept content.

II.

Next came a hermit:
He found out the cave;
With girdle, gown, and cross—trembling and grave—
He entered. There that Knight lay, out of shape,
Mere pulp: the Lion, waking up, did gape,
Opened his yellow orbs, heard some one grope,
And—seeing the woollen coat bound with a rope,
A black peaked cowl, and inside that a man—
He finished yawning and to growl began:

Then, with a voice like prison-gates which creak,
Roared, "What would'st thou?"

"My King!"

"King?"

"May I speak?"

"Of whom?"

"The Prince."

"Is that what makes a King?"

The monk bowed reverence, "Majesty! I bring
A message—wherefore keep this child?"

"For that
Whene'er it rains I've some one here to chat."

"Return him!"

"Not so!"

"What then wilt thou do?
Would'st eat him?"

"Ay—if I have naught to chew!"

"Sire! think upon His Majesty in woe!"

"They killed my dam," the Beast said, "long ago."

" Bethink thee, sire, a king implores a king."

" Nonsense—he talks—he's man ! when my notes ring
A Lion's heard ! "

" His only boy ! "

" Well, well !

He hath a daughter."

" She's no heir."

" *I* dwell

Alone in this my home, mid wood and rock,
Thunder my music, and the lightning-shock
My lamp ;—let his content him ! "

" Ah ! show pity."

" What means that word ? is't current in your city ? "

" Lion, thou'dst wish to go to heaven—see here !
I offer thee indulgence, and, writ clear,
God's passport to His paradise,"—

" Get forth,

Thou holy rogue ! " bellowed the Beast in wrath :

The hermit disappeared !

III.

Thereat left free,
Full of a lion's vast serenity
He slept again, letting the still night pass:
The moon rose, starting spectres on the grass,
Shrouding the marsh with mist, blotting the ways,
And melting the black woodland to grey maze;
No stir was seen below, above, no motion
Save of the white stars trooping to the ocean:
And while the mole and cricket in the brake
Kept watch, the Lion's measured breath did make
Slow symphony which kept all creatures calm.

Sudden—loud cries and clamours! striking qualm
Into the heart o' the quiet; horn and shout
Causing the solemn wood to reel with rout,
And all the nymphs to tremble in their trees.
The uproars of a midnight chase are these
Which shakes the shades, the marsh, mountain and stream,
And breaks the silence of their sombre dream.

The thicket flashed with many a lurid spark
Of torches borne 'mid wild cries through the dark;
Hounds, nose to earth, ran yelping through the wood,
And armed groups, gathering in the alleys, stood.
Terrific was the noise that rolled before;
It seemed a squadron; nay, 'twas something more—
A whole battalion, sent by that sad king
With force of arms his little Prince to bring,
Together with the Lion's bleeding hide.

Which here was right or wrong? who can decide?
Have beasts or men most claim to live? God wots!
He is the unit, we the cypher-dots.

Well warmed with meat and drink those soldiers were,
Good hearts they bore—and many a bow and spear;
Their number large, and by a captain led
Valiant, whilst some in foreign wars had bled,
And all were men approved and firm in fight;
The Lion heard their cries, affronting night,

For by this time his awful lids were lifted;
But from the rock his chin he never shifted,
And only his great tail wagged to and fro.

Meantime, outside the cavern, startled so,
Came close the uproar of this shouting crowd.
As round a web flies buzzing in a cloud,
Or hive-bees swarming o'er a bear ensnared,
This hunter-legion buzzed, and swarmed, and flared.
In battle order all their ranks were set:
'Twas understood the Beast they came to get,
Fierce as a tiger's cunning—strong to seize—
Could munch up heroes as an ape cracks fleas,
Could with one glance make Jove's own bird look down;
Wherefore they laid him siege as to a town.
The pioneers with axes cleared the way,
The spearmen followed in a close array,
The archers held their arrows on the string;
Silence was bid, lest any chattering
Should mask the Lion's footstep in the wood;
The dogs—who know the moment when 'tis good

To hold their peace—went first, nose to the ground,
Giving no tongue; the torches all around
Hither and thither flickered, their long beams
Through sighing foliage sending ruddy gleams;—
Such is the order a great hunt should have:
And soon between the trunks they spy the cave,
A black, dim-outlined hole, deep in the gloom,
Gaping, but blank and silent as the tomb,
Wide open to the night, as though it feared
As little all that clamour as it heard.
There's smoke where fire smoulders, and a town,
When men lay siege, rings tocsin up and down;
Nothing so here! therefore with vague dismay
Each stood, and grasp on bow or blade did lay,
Watching the horrid stillness of that chasm:
The dogs among themselves whimpered: a spasm
From the horror lurking in such voiceless places—
Worse than the rage of tempests—blanched all faces:
Yet they were there to find and fight this Thing,
So they advance, each bush examining,
Dreading full sore the very prey they sought;
The pioneers held high the lamps they brought:

"There! that is it! the very mouth of the den!"
The trees all round it muttered, warning men:
Still they kept step and neared it—look you now,
Company's pleasant! and there were a thou——

Good Lord!—all in a moment, there's its face!
Frightful!—they saw the Lion! Not one pace
Further stirred any man; the very trees
Grew blacker with his presence, and the breeze
Blew shudders into all hearts present there:
Yet, whether 'twas from valour or wild fear,
The archers drew—and arrow, bolt, and dart
Made target of the Beast. He, on his part—
As calm as Pelion in the rain or hail—
Bristled majestic from the nose to tail,
And shook full fifty missiles from his hide;
Yet any meaner brute had found beside
Enough still sticking fast to make him yell
Or fly; the blood was trickling down his fell,
But no heed took he, glaring steadfastly;
And all those men of war, amazed to be

Thus met by so stupendous might and pride,
Thought him no beast, but some god brutified.
The hounds, tail down, slunk back behind the spears;
And then the Lion, 'mid the silence, rears
His awful face, and over wood and marsh
Roared a vast roar, hoarse, vibrant, vengeful, harsh,—
A rolling, raging peal of wrath, which spread
From the quaking earth to the echoing vault o'er-
head,
Making the half-awakened thunder cry
"Who thunders there?" from its black bed of sky.

This ended all!—sheer horror cleared the coast!
As fogs are driven by wind, that valorous host
Melted, dispersed to all the quarters four,
Clean panic-stricken by that monstrous roar;
Each with one impulse—leaders, rank and file,
Deeming it haunted ground, where Earth somewhile
Is wont to breed marvels of lawless might—
They scampered, mad, blind, reckless, wild with fright.
Then quoth the Lion, "Woods and mountains! see,
A thousand men enslaved fear one Beast free!"

As lava to volcanoes, so a roar
Is to these creatures; and, the eruption o'er
In heaven-shaking wrath, they mostly calm.
The gods themselves to lions yield the palm
For magnanimity. When Jove was king,
Hercules said, "Let's finish off the thing,
Not the Nemæan merely; every one
We'll strangle—all the lions." Whereupon
The lions yawned a "much obliged!" his way.

But this Beast, being whelped by night, not day—
Offspring of glooms—was sterner; one of those
Who go down slowly when their storm's at close;
His anger had a savage ground-swell in it:
He loved to take his naps, too, to the minute,
And to be roused up thus with horn and hound,—
To find an ambush sprung—to be hemmed round—
Targetted—'twas an insult to his grove!
He paced towards the hill, climbed high above,
Lifted his voice, and, as the sowers sow
The seeds down wind, thus did that Lion throw

His message far enough the town to reach.
" King! your behaviour really passes speech!
Thus far no harm I've wrought to him your son;
But now I give you notice—when night's done
I will make entry at your city-gate,
Bringing the Prince alive; and those that wait
To see him in my jaws—your lackey-crew—
Shall see me eat him in your palace too!"

Quiet the night passed, while the streamlets bubbled,
And the clouds sailed across the vault untroubled.

Next morning this is what was viewed in town:

Dawn coming!—people going!—some adown
Praying, some crying; pallid cheeks, swift feet,
And a huge Lion stalking through the street!

IV.

The quaking townsmen in the cellars hid;
How make resistance? briefly, no one did;
The soldiers left their posts, the gates stood wide;
'Twas felt the Lion had upon his side

A majesty so godlike, such an air—
That den, too, was so dark and grim a lair—
It seemed scarce short of rash impiety
To cross its path as the fierce Beast went by.
So to the palace and its gilded dome
With stately steps unchallenged did he roam,
In many a spot with those vile darts scarred still,
As you may note an oak scored with the bill,
Yet nothing recks that giant-trunk; so here
Paced this proud wounded Lion, free of fear,
While all the people held aloof in dread,
Seeing the scarlet jaws of that great head
Hold up the princely boy—aswoon.
Is't true
Princes are flesh and blood? Ah, yes! and you
Had wept with sacred pity, seeing him
Swing in the Lion's mouth, body and limb:
The tender captive gripped by those grim fangs,
On either side the jowl helplessly hangs,
Deathlike, albeit he bore no wound of tooth.
And for the brute thus gagged it was, in sooth,

A grievous thing to wish to roar, yet be
Muzzled and dumb, so he walked savagely,
His pent heart blazing through his burning eyes,
While not one bow is stretched, no arrow flies;
They dreaded, peradventure, lest some shaft
Shot with a trembling hand and faltering craft
Might miss the Beast and pierce the Prince:
So, still
As he had promised, roaring from his hill,
This Lion, scorning town and townsfolk, sick
To view such terror, goes on straight and quick
To the King's house, hoping to meet there one
Who dares to speak with him:—outside is none!
The door's ajar, and flaps with every blast;
He enters it—within those walls at last!—
No man!
For, certes, though he raged and wept,
His Majesty, like all, close shelter kept,
Solicitous to live, holding his breath
Specially precious to the realm: now death
Is not thus viewed by honest beasts of prey,
And when the Lion found *him* fled away,

Ashamed to be so grand, man being so base,
He muttered to himself in that dark place
Where lions keep their thoughts: "This wretched King!
'Tis well, I'll eat his boy!" Then, wandering,
Lordly he traversed courts and corridors,
Paced beneath vaults of gold on shining floors,
Glanced at the throne deserted, stalked from hall
To hall—green, yellow, crimson—empty all!
Rich couches void, soft seats unoccupied!
And as he walked he looked from side to side
To find some pleasant nook for his repast,
Since appetite was come to munch at last
The princely morsel:—Ah! what sight astounds
That grisly lounger?

In the palace-grounds
An alcove on a garden gives, and there
A tiny thing—forgot in the general fear,
Lulled in the flower-sweet dreams of infancy,
Bathed with soft sunlight falling brokenly
Through leaf and lattice—was that moment waking;
A little lovely maid, most dear and taking,

The Prince's sister; all alone—undressed—
She sate up singing: children sing so best!

A voice of joy, than silver lute-string softer!
A mouth all rose-bud, blossoming in laughter!
A baby-angel hard at play! a dream
Of Bethlehem's cradle, or what nests would seem
If girls were hatched!—all these! Eyes, too, so blue
That sea and sky might own their sapphire new!
Neck bare, arms bare, pink legs and stomach bare!
Nought hid the roseate satin skin, save where
A little white-laced shift was fastened free;
She looked as fresh, singing thus peacefully,
As stars at twilight, or as April's heaven;
A floweret—you had said—divinely given,
To show on earth how God's own lilies grow;
Such was this beauteous baby-maid; and so
The Beast caught sight of her and stopped—
And then
Entered:—the joists creaked as he stalked straight in!

Above the playthings by the little bed
The Lion put his shaggy massive head,
Dreadful with savage might and lordly scorn,
More dreadful with that princely prey so borne;
Which she, quick spying, "Brother! brother!" cried,
"Oh! my own brother!" and, unterrified—
Looking a living rose that made the place
Brighter and warmer with its fearless grace—
She gazed upon that monster of the wood,
Whose yellow balls not Typhon had withstood;
And—well! who knows what thoughts these small heads hold?
She rose up in her cot—full height, and bold,
And shook her pink fist angrily at him.

Whereon—close to the little bed's white rim,
All dainty silk and laces—this huge Brute
Set down her brother gently at her foot,
Just as a mother might, and said to her—
"*Don't be put out, now! there he is, Dear! there!*"

NENCIA.

A PASTORAL POEM.

By LORENZO DE' MEDICI, surnamed "The Magnificent."

Translated for the first time, and in the original metre, from the Italian.

[This pastoral by the great Florentine Ruler, Lorenzo, the Magnificent, is taken from the Italian text, printed at Bergamo in 1763 A.D. The Bergamese editor remarks, of the fifty stanzas composing it, "*Sono nel loro genere incomparabili;*" and all may certainly admire the dramatic force with which the illustrious Medicean has, as it were, entered into the very heart and soul of his peasant, to depict a rural passion. The "Nencia" was probably written about A.D. 1480—the dawn of the golden age of Italian art—when the "Magnificent" Lorenzo was chief of all the scholars and poets, as well as of his citizens of Florence, and gathered at his table such men as Michael Angelo, Luca Signorelli, Ghirlandajo, Filippino Lippi, Botticelli, Pulci, Poliziano, and Pico de Mirandola.]

I.

I BURN with love;—love makes me bold to sing
Praise of the damsel who undoes my heart;

Each time I think a little tender thing
About her, 'tis as if my breath would part:
The world her match for beauty cannot bring,
No other eyes such lovely lightnings dart;
In town and tower, and city have I been,
But seen none nowhere like my country-queen.

2.

To Monticelli, every market-day,
To Prato, Empoli, and San Casciano,
To Poggibonsi, and to Colle gay,
By San Donato down to Dicamano;
To Castelfranco, all Figline-way;
San Pier', Montagna, Borgo, Gagliano,
Ofttimes I wend—a-buying and a-selling,—
And Barberin, where my Nenciozza's dwelling.

3.

But never once—saving at Barberin—
See I a girl so dear, discreet and taking,
With cheek, and neck, and nape, and dimpled chin
So smooth and white: or of such perfect making.

Her eyes! 'tis like torch-light, when feasts begin,
To feel their lids lift, and their glance awaking
Joyance; and 'twixt them comes the winsome nose,
With proud pink nostrils, like the pits in a rose.

4.

Of pink sea-coral are her dear lips dight,
With, underneath, two strings of sea-pearls plenty;
A Tuscan foal's milk-row is not so white!
(To judge thereby my Nencia's come to twenty.)
Her stainless cheeks have all the softened light
Of misted marble, chiselled smooth and dainty;
Amid the blooms of Beauty she is Rose;
The wide world no such lovely wonder shows!

5.

Beyond all noble fortunes fortunate
He'll be, who takes her to his happy bosom;
Well might he call his star glorious and great
Whose lot it is to wear this heavenly blossom:
Well may he make his peace thenceforth with Fate,
And lightly bear whatever ills should cross him,

Who clasps fair Nencia as his wedded wife,
White as wild wax, and with love's honey rife!

6.

I'll liken thee to fairy cloudland gleams
Which mix the welkin and the world together;
I will compare thee unto Dian's beams
Who round poor cabins sheds her silver weather;
Spring-water none so fresh and sparkling seems,
Nor late-trod wine so luscious. Sweet one! whether
Early or late we see thee, 'tis as neat
And fair and wholesome as new-bolted wheat!

7.

Her eyes can steal a shepherd's soul away
Through wall of flesh, whenever she doth look;
You see her, and you love, the selfsame day,
Albeit the story goes her heart is rock;
Troops of tamed lovers her behests obey,
And live upon her will, a patient flock:
'Tis little she can lose giving one glance,
But, whoso wins it, how his heart doth dance!

8.

La Nencia mia! Ah, the pearl she seems
Going afoot, on Saints' Days, to hear matins!
She wears a bodice which right bravely gleams
Of damask, and a skirt of brightest satins,
A golden girdle clasps her waist, and streams
Down to the knee with jewelled pins and patines;
When she hath heard the Mass, and paceth home,
How like a heavenly angel she doth come!

9.

She hath no fellow at the sheaf-tying,
She works and laughs when all the rest are sped;
Or else at home her merry wheel, fast-flying,
Spins ducats for her with its dancing thread:
For whatso's deft and rich she will be trying,
Woollen or silk; and all the while her head
Droops like a snow-drop when the neighbours, mustered,
Praise her. She is as sweet as millet-custard!

10.

Thou hast so witched me with thy braided brow
I cannot ply my mattock as before;

For meat and drink I have no stomach now;
No morsel can I swallow any more:
I grow so thin, the withered winter-bough
Lets the blast through it with a sigh less sore:
Nor day nor night repose or comfort brings,
I am so tied to thee by twenty strings.

II.

I am so wild with utter love of thee,
All night I toss and groan and start and sigh;
The kindly gossips say to comfort me:
"Shepherd! take heart! thou'lt win her by-and-by."
The village damsels jest because they see
I go with cornamuse, where thou dost lie,
At eve, and sing for love some little trifle,
But thou dost sleep, or with hushed laughter stifle.

12.

Last night I could not sleep a single wink,
It seemed a thousand years ere dawn would break,
Bethinking thou wouldst take thy flock to drink
At day-time, and wouldst wend down to the lake;

So, not to miss one passing blessed blink
Of those black eyes, I, for their sweet light's sake,
Waited two hours against the bake-house close
Till the full moon set and my Nencia rose.

13.

My Nencia's beauty hath not any blot.
She's stately, straight and tall as wench can be;
A dimple in her chin my love hath got,
Which makes her bright laugh lovelier to see.
There is no single charm she boasteth not;
I think dame Nature framed her purposely
So fair, so fine, so noble, and so tender,
That all the world might homage to her render.

14.

I culled a posy of snow-blossomed spray,
With buds and berries gathered here and there,
It was for thee; but thou didst turn away
So grand! not deigning answer, foul or fair.
Then spake I to myself, "My love doth play
The high and mighty; I will match her here!"

And ofttimes since, albeit I turn mine eye,
The folks may see how proud I pass them by.

15.

Yesterday, all day long, I watched for thee
Hard by the mill: I said: "If she comes now
It cannot happen but my chance will be;
The beasts are safe, grazing upon the brow:
We'll loiter by the kiln, Nencia and me;
We'll stroll together to the fountain,—thou
And thy Vallera,—under th' hiding vine;
I will tend thy flock and thou shalt herd mine!"

16.

And when at last from your cot-door you came,
Holding the hound from hurrying the sheep,
My heart swelled in my breast, and shook my frame,
While tears of joy down either cheek did creep:
I started for the cross roads, all aflame,
Quickening my calves and heifers up the steep;
And waited on the knoll where thou shouldst pass,
But at the bye-path thou didst turn—alas!

17.

When next thou comest with thy water-pot,
Wend, I beseech thee, hither to our well!
I'll draw for thee, and make all toil forgot:
Who knows but there will be something to tell?
Ofttimes I had a mind to hide it not
When thou wert by, but fear always befell;
Yet, if this is to hap, why linger longer?
The chestnut's on the bough, the grapes grow stronger!

18.

It was in April that my heart was caught,
The day I saw thee plucking herbs and cresses;
I spake thee fair, but thou didst answer naught
And frowned, because folks passed; tossing thy tresses;
To know thy name and house I vainly sought,
Lest love be lost for what one word expresses;
And from that hour I was no more the same:
I grew thy thrall; thou had'st me, meek and tame.

19.

Nenciozza mia! I have a mind to go—
Now that my beasts are in the will to drink—

Down to the pool, where thou must come, I know,
And there to sit me still upon the brink,
Till I shall spy thee cross. To loiter so
Were pleasant, if it happen as I think.
I'll stay like stone until my sweet hath passed;
Ah! do not make my watching vain at last!

20.

Nenciozza mia! I go a' Saturday
To sell two loads of wood in Florence-town;
While the sleek heifers cropped the flowers away
I set me yesterday to cut it down.
Ah! if thou'dst come, Dear!—But at least I may
Bring fardels for thee, buttons for thy gown,
Powder, pomander,—not to beautify thee!—
Or pins, or needles;—Something let me buy thee!

21.

Jove! when she dances, what a step and skill!
What lightness! like a kid's her quick feet fly!
She turns as swiftly as the sails of a mill,
And marks the music, hand and foot and eye:

And, when all's ended, curtsey low she will
And take two backward steps, so gracefully!
She makes the very prettiest salute,
There's not in Florence any dame could do't!

22.

Ask me, Dear! some small trifle from the fair!
What shall I fetch thee, what slight dainty thing?
A brooch of carved shell for my love to wear?
Or hooks and eyes, or buckles, or silk-strings?
A broidered gipsire for thy kirtle, Dear!
Or lace to tie thy lappets, shall I bring?
Or wilt thou choose to bind thy bodice close
A cord of sky-blue silk? or none of those

23.

But a long necklace for thy milky throat,
Strung with round coral beads of rosy pink,
All with a cross to swing midway; and, note,
They make them great and small! which dost thou think
The prettier? if my blood could drop, God wot!
Round ruddy beads to please thee, 'twould not shrink!

So, if I find thy fancy, hold it thine,
Though I should pawn this jacket, Nencia mine!

24.

If thou should'st say, when Sieve rolls at flood,
"Fling thyself in!" I'd headlong leap straightway!
If thou should'st bid so end my life, I would
Dash head against a rock, and die that way!
Command me any deed that seemeth good
In those dear eyes and I shall straight obey.
I know some promise thus abundantly
Who would not spoil a pair of shoes for thee.

25.

Yea! and I know—my Nencia! my heart's treasure!
There's some one whispers thee in my despite:
Let him beware! I'll give him market measure;
Six inches in his midriff, sharp and bright!
Thou 'st seen the knife I wear! Dio! 'tis pleasure
To mark it do its work at feast or fight!
If in my quarters it finds any man,
By God! the steel shall make him skip a span!

26.

Oh me! a lass like this white maid of mine,
So honey-sweet and winning, ne'er was seen!
She's lusty, large, and fresh;—and still so fine,
So fair and graceful; of all feasts the queen.
But yet that mirth and modesty combine
To keep her ever all she should have been;
And how her singing all the feast enhances!
And, dancing, how all dancers she outdances!

27.

I too know something!—with the best I'd vie
If, Nencia! I dared open all my heart:
There is no better judge porklings to buy;
I shine at plough and harrow, spade and cart:
When, stripped, I tie my seed-bag on, or ply
The axe, they say "What a stout wight thou art!"
The mattock and the pick I wield like thunder,
And blow the horn and cow-pipes, till you wonder.

28.

But Thou, but thou! Ah, none is like to thee!
A well-scrubbed kneading-trough is not so white!

As syrup draws the flies thou drawest me;
As figs tempt wasps so art thou my delight;
Richer than rape-blooms, sweet as what the bee
Sucks from their gold thou art! Oh, if I might
One kiss of honey from that red mouth rifle
New goat's cheese after such would seem a trifle.

29.

I've waited all this while for thee to pass
Musing my love where the quick waters shine;
My beasts have grazed off every bite of grass,
I must not tarry, or the fools will pine:
What doest, Nencia! not to come? Alas!
I looked to see thy wandering charge and mine
Mix in the willows, then 'twere one hour's gain
To let them seem one flock, though we be twain!

30.

Nenciozza mia! 'tis time for me to go!
My yearlings must be tethered in the stall,
God be with thee! I send fond farewell so—
Far off; for Mona Masa loud doth call.

My heart stays here! have pity! let me know
Thou giv'st me back some tittle, if not all,
Of thine. Good-bye! Good night! *la buona sera!*
Sleep soft, and think kind things of thy Vallera!

31.

Nencia! Nenciozza! one day say you will
Climb the hill with me through the willows here!
Promise! say "Yes, I'll come!" and fear no ill,
Nenciozza mia! I'll deserve thee, Dear!
Nencia! I love thee so; my love is still
So great and true, I'd die to bring thee cheer!
If thou wert stung by some beast, fell and frightful,
I'd suck the poison, and think death delightful!

32.

Or we might meet farther away, where yonder
The sun's eye doth not shine in the green gloom;
Don't say "you could not answer!" do not ponder
If we should hear them when they called from home:
But come, and lift thy hood, and let the wonder
Of thy dark blessed eyes gleam on me! Come!

Eyes which befit thy beauteous breast and brow
Being angelic, and an angel thou.

33.

Cara Nenciozza mia! I hear the bleating
One of thy flock makes in the close below,
Some wolf, may be, is there—killing and eating
With deadly jaws, thy lambkin:—Nay, 'tis so!
Wilt thou not take thy staff—wilt thou not? sweeting!
And with me to the lonely valley go;
And strike the caitiff dead? I'll be with thee!
But all the folk shall say: "She killed him! She!"

34.

Ah, come! I know a nest of speckled thrushes
Ready to fly: the prettiest feathered thing!
'Tis hid away in a thick clump of bushes,
There is no caged birds that so sweetly sing!
To-morrow I will show you, for time pushes
If thou'dst rear one; and then, Dear! I will bring
An oaten cake; while—for a good excuse—
I shall pass, playing on my cornamuse.

35.

Nenciozza mia! I shall not seem a clown!
When I get home my broidered vest to wear,
And lace my shoes, and tie my long hair down,
You'll take me for a sleek, rich townsman,
Dear!
Just now I know I'm rough about the crown,
The barber asks too much my locks to shear
And curl, but if my marketing goes fairly
I will be barbered properly and rarely.

36.

Farewell! my Lily with the lovely bloom!
I see the beasts are breaking for the wheat;
To-morrow, Nencia! when again I come,
I'll bring you wild wood strawberries—if they're
sweet—
So, when you hear my cornamusa boom,
Trip to the spot we wot, where the roads
meet,
At corner of the orchard. I can find
Dittany there for thee, if thou'st a mind!

37.

I asked thee of thy father—dost thou know?
Old Beco droned me out some doubtful word,
And, taking counsel of thy mother so,
Gave me to understand I'm not preferred;
Yet look for me to-come—('less thou say'st "no"—)
With such a band some day to catch my bird
That none shall let. I've told father and mother
Thee I will have for wife, and never other!

38.

Oh, when I see thee compassed round with folk
Something inside me seems to boil and swim;
But if one makes thee eyes, ah, I could choke,
My heart leaps up my throat to come at him!
Alas! poor heart! by this 'twere burst and broke,
So full of thee it is; full to the brim!
But that its thousand sighs, each one an anguish,
Fly all day long to thee, saying "I languish!"

39.

Nenciozza! Come at dinner-time! we'll eat
Salads together, and, it may be, cheese:

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Be sure you keep your word to come, my sweet!
But so that no accursed gossip sees.
I bear my weapons, Dear! if we did meet
Some of old Beco's crew under the trees
There'd be wild words—I know—and blood, maybe;—
The Devil flay them, if they flout at me!

40.

I talk too fierce! Ah Nencia!—when she goes,
On feast-days, what a pearl of grace she seems!
Smooth, white, and clean, and neat from top to toes:
A little ring on each midfinger gleams.
For she hath store of trinkets, and bestows
So trimly here and there her beauty's beams.
Pearls too—fine pearls—my love wears! Not the best
Can anywhere compare with Nencia dressed!

41.

Ah, Nencia! didst thou know the love immense,
The burning love I bear for those bright eyes,
The tears I pour, the grievous woe intense
That seems to crack and rend me with deep sighs;

If thou knewedst this, and all—thy gentle sense
Would melt—thou would'st all lesser love despise,
And cry "my poor Vallera! thou art he
That lov'st me most, thou shalt not woeful be!"

42.

I marked thee, Nencia! tripping home that day
From Santo—oh, so splendid! I was dazed.
Thou hadst a mind to take the meadow way
And slipped adown where Beco's asses grazed.
I hid myself; quoth I: "meet now we may!"
Then while you singing tripped, I, breathless, gazed;
And so drew closer; but ere this could pass
You spied me, and you turned aside, alas!

43.

Nenciozza mia! it made me dumb with pleasure
To see thy rose-fair face even thus near:
If I could once more come so nigh my treasure
I'd live upon such joy a whole long year!
If I could speak thee forth my love's full measure
Meseems my life's luck would be perfect, Dear!

If in my grasp that dear hand I could hold
I'd not unclasp, to get mine filled with gold!

44.

I'm here! but Nencia does not come, nor wake:
Nencia! why art thou such a slug-a-bed?
Thou hearest me; thou know'st that for thy sake
I blow this cornamuse; why art thou hid?
Thou wert not wont such heavy sleep to take!
Pleaseth no more the music, as it did?
All day I conned this gentle strain to sing thee,
I meant it for a charm would surely bring thee.

45.

Oh heart too hard! what maiden would not render
Love to a lover loving her like me?
Who else would melt not, and wax honey-tender
Seeing me suffer thus: Ah, Nencia! see!
Thou knowest I am so faithful; must it end here
The pain which should be crowned with joy by thee?
Ah, yield a little! one kind thought discover,
Then do with me as pitchforks do with clover!

46.

Nay! when one speaks of forks, how deft she is!
There's no such nimble worker in the land.
She weaves a hat of straw that way and this,
With knots and ends so dexterously planned,
You never saw such skill! the neighbours press
To see the plaits obey her cunning hand.
She can make osier-pots, and baskets, too,
And what the best doth, that will Nencia do.

47.

Nencia! ah, *Nencia!* I do love thee so!
As the poor moth the flame which crisps his wings;
Ah mia Nenciozza! seeking thee I go
As flies to honey, when the sweetness brings
Death. Must I die? Then shine, dear Lantern! oh,
Shed sweet death, Honey! But if better things
Await me, then, kind Love! be this now said
Before the chestnuts fall, and grapes grow red.

48.

Peace, poor Vallera! peace, thou foolish youth!
Wasted thy song is, and thy sorrow vain!

It seemed she liked me once, but now, in sooth,
She likes me not, I see: therefore sharp pain
Rives me and drives me, sobbing: for no ruth
My love will show, and these hot tears again
Tell to what anguish I am led, alas!
Who shake with passion, if she only pass.

49.

Nencia! Nenciozza! thou wilt be my death!
Yet so to see me die can please thee not.
Ah, would to God that I could keep my breath
Whilst I drew forth my heart, and laid it hot
Upon thy hand, to hear how its beat saith
"*Nencia! Nenciozza!*"—and to witness what
A load it bears! But, if thou didst so take
My heart in hand, 'twould sigh "keep me!" and break!

50.

Good-bye! *Nenciozza!* Heaven have guard of thee!
The weary beasts are to their homestead near;
I must not have, for any fault of me,
Some heifer left lowing outside her lair;

The last one now will o'er the river be.
(Yea! yea! Madonna Masa! I can hear!
I come!) Farewell, cold Love! She calls again,
There's Nanni bustling, and the wine to strain!

THE RAJPOOT WIFE.

SING something, Jymul Rao! for the goats are gathered now,
And no more water is to bring;
The village-gates are set, and the night is grey as yet,
God hath given wondrous fancies to thee:—sing!

Then Jymul's supple fingers, with a touch that doubts and lingers,
Sets a thrill the saddest wire of all the six;
And the girls sit in a tangle, and hush the tinkling bangle,
While the boys pile the flame with store of sticks.

And vain of village praise, but full of ancient days,
He begins with a smile and with a sigh—

"Who knows the bâbul-tree by the bend of the
Ravee?"
Quoth Gunesh, "I!" and twenty voices, "I!"

"Well—listen! there below, in the shade of bloom
and bough,
Is a musjid of carved and coloured stone;
And Abdool Shureef Khan — I spit, to name that
man!—
Lieth there, underneath, all alone.

"He was Sultan Mahmood's vassal, and wore an
Amir's tassel
In his green hadj-turban, at Nungul.
Yet the head which went so proud, it is not in his
shroud;
There are bones in that grave,—but not a skull!

"And, deep drove in his breast, there moulders with
the rest
A dagger, brighter once than Chundra's ray;
A Rajpoot lohar whet it, and a Rajpoot woman set it
Past the power of any hand to tear away.

"'Twas the Ranee Neila true, the wife of Soorj Dehu,
The Lord of the Rajpoots of Nourpoor;
You shall hear the mournful story, with its sorrow and its glory,
And curse Shureef Khan,—the soor!"

All in the wide Five-Waters was none like Soorj Dehu,
To foeman who so dreadful, to friend what heart so true?

Like Indus, through the mountains came down the Muslim ranks,
And town-walls fell before them as flooded river-banks;

But Soorj Dehu the Rajpoot owned neither town nor wall;
His house the camp, his roof-tree the sky that covers all;

His seat of state the saddle; his robe a shirt of mail;
His court a thousand Rajpoots close at his stallion's tail.

Not less was Soorj a Rajah because no crown he wore
Save the grim helm of iron with sword-marks dinted o'er;

Because he grasped no sceptre save the sharp tulwar, made
Of steel that fell from heaven,—for 'twas Indra forged that blade!

And many a starless midnight the shout of "Soorj Dehu!"
Broke up with spear and matchlock the Muslim's "Illahu!"

And many a day of battle upon the Muslim proud
Fell Soorj, as Indra's lightning falls from the silent cloud.

Nor ever shot nor arrow, nor spear nor slinger's stone,
Could pierce the mail that Neila the Ranee buckled on:

But traitor's subtle tongue-thrust through fence of steel can break;
And Soorj was taken sleeping, whom none had ta'en awake.

Then at the noon, in durbar, swore fiercely Shureef Khan
That Soorj should die in torment, or live a Mussulman.

But Soorj laughed lightly at him, and answered,
"Work your will!
The last breath of my body shall curse your Prophet still."

With words of insult shameful, and deeds of cruel kind,
They vexed that Rajpoot's body, but never moved his mind.

And one is come who sayeth, "Ho! Rajpoots! Soorj is bound;
Your lord is caged and baited by Shureef Khan, the hound.

"The Khan hath caught and chained him, like a beast, in iron cage,
And all the camp of Islam spends on him spite and rage;

"All day the coward Muslims spend on him rage and spite;
If ye have thought to help him, 'twere good ye go to-night."

Up sprang a hundred horsemen, flashed in each hand
a sword;
In each heart burned the gladness of dying for their
lord;

Up rose each Rajpoot rider, and buckled on with speed
The bridle-chain and breast-cord, and the saddle of his
steed.

But unto none sad Neila gave word to mount and
ride;
Only she called the brothers of Soorj unto her side,

And said, "Take order straightway to seek this camp
with me;
If love and craft can conquer, a thousand is as three.

"If love be weak to save him, Soorj dies — and ye
return,
For where a Rajpoot dieth, the Rajpoot widows burn."

Thereat the Ranee Neila unbraided from her hair
The pearls as great as Kashmir grapes Soorj gave his
wife to wear,

And all across her bosoms—like lotus-buds to see—
She wrapped the tinselled sari of a dancing Kunchenee;

And fastened on her ankles the hundred silver bells,
To whose light laugh of music the Nautch-girl darts and dwells.

And all in dress a Nautch-girl, but all in heart a queen,
She set her foot to stirrup with a sad and settled mien.

Only one thing she carried no Kunchenee should bear,
The knife between her bosoms;—ho, Shureef! have a care!

Thereat, with running ditty of mingled pride and pity,
Jymul Rao makes the six wires sigh;
And the girls with tearful eyes note the music's fall and rise,
And the boys let the fire fade and die.

All day lay Soorj the Rajpoot in Shureef's iron cage,
All day the coward Muslims spent on him spite and rage.

With bitter cruel torments, and deeds of shameful kind,
They racked and broke his body, but could not shake
his mind.

And only at the Azan, when all their worst was vain,
They left him, like dogs slinking from a lion in his
pain.

No meat nor drink they gave him through all that
burning day,
And done to death, but scornful, at twilight-time he lay.

So when the gem of Shiva uprose, the crescent moon,
Soorj spake unto his spirit, "The end is coming soon!

"I would the end might hasten, could Neila only
know—
What is that Nautch-girl singing with voice so known
and low?

"Singing beneath the cage-bars the song of love and
fear
My Neila sang at parting!—what doth that Nautch-
girl here?

"Whence comes she by the music of Neila's tender strain,
She, in that shameless tinsel?—O, Nautch-girl, sing again!"

"Ah, Soorj!"—so followed answer—"here thine own Neila stands,
Faithful in life and death alike,—look up, and take my hands:

"Speak low, lest the guard hear us;—to-night, if thou must die,
Shureef shall have no triumph, but bear thee company!"

So sang she like the Koïl that dies beside its mate;
With eye as black and fearless, and love as hot and [illegible]at.

Then the Chief laid his pallid lips upon the little palm,
And sank down with a smile of love, his face all glad and calm;

And through the cage-bars Neila felt the brave heart stop fast,
"O Soorj!"—she cried—"I follow! have patience to the last."

She turned and went. "Who passes?" challenged
the Mussulman;
"A Nautch-girl, I."—"What seek'st thou?"—"The
presence of the Khan;

"Ask if the high chief-captain be pleased to hear me
sing?"
And Shureef, full of feasting, the Kunchenee bade
bring.

Then, all before the Muslims, aflame with lawless wine,
Entered the Ranee Neila, in grace and face divine;

And all before the Muslims, wagging their goatish
chins,
The Rajpoot Princess set her to the "bee-dance" that
begins,

"*If my love loved me, he should be a bee,*
I the yellow champak, love the honey of me."

All the wreathëd movements danced she of that
dance;
Not a step she slighted, not a wanton glance;

In her unveiled bosom chased th' intruding bee,
To her waist—and lower—she! a Rajpoot, she!

Sang the melting music, swayed the languorous limb:
Shureef's drunken heart beat—Shureef's eyes waxed dim.

From his finger Shureef loosed an Ormuz pearl—
"By the Prophet," quoth he, "'tis a winsome girl!

"Take this ring; and 'prithee, come and have thy pay;
I would hear at leisure more of such a lay."

Glared his eyes on her eyes, passing o'er the plain,
Glared at the tent-purdah—never glared again!

Never opened after unto gaze or glance,
Eyes that saw a Rajpoot dance a shameful dance;

For the kiss she gave him was his first and last—
Kiss of dagger, driven to his heart, and past.

At her feet he wallowed, choked with wicked blood;
In his breast the katar quivered where it stood.

At the hilt his fingers vainly—wildly—try,
Then they stiffen feeble;—die! thou slayer, die!

From his jewelled scabbard drew she Shureef's sword,
Cut atwain the neck-bone of the Muslim lord.

Underneath the starlight, sooth, a sight of dread!
Like the Goddess Kali, comes she with the head,

Comes to where her brothers guard their murdered chief;
All the camp is silent, but the night is brief.

At his feet she flings it, flings her burden vile;
"Soorj! I keep my promise! Brothers, build the pile!"

They have built it, set it, all as Rajpoots do,
From the cage of iron taken Soorj Dehu;

In the lap of Neila, seated on the pile,
Laid his head—she radiant, like a queen, the while.

Then the lamp is lighted, and the ghee is poured—
"Soorj, we burn together: O my love, my lord!"

In the flame and crackle dies her tender tongue,
Dies the Ranee, truest, all true wives among.

At the morn a clamour runs from tent to tent,
Like the wild geese cackling when the night is spent.

" Shureef Khan lies headless! gone is Soorj Dehu!
And the wandering Nautch-girl, who has seen her, who?"

This but know the sentries, at the " breath of dawn"
Forth there fared two horsemen, by the first was borne

The urn of clay, the vessel that Rajpoots use to bring
The ashes of dead kinsmen to Gunga's holy spring.

THE CALIPH'S DRAUGHT.

UPON a day in Ramadan—
When sunset brought an end of fast,
And in his station every man
Prepared to share the glad repast—
Sate Mohtasim in royal state,
The pillaw smoked upon the gold;
The fairest slave of those that wait
Mohtasim's jewelled cup did hold.

Of crystal carven was the cup,
With turquoise set along the brim,
A lid of amber closed it up;
'Twas a great king who gave it him.

The slave poured sherbet to the brink,
Stirred in wild honey and pomegranate,
With snow and rose-leaves cooled the drink,
And bore it where the Caliph sate.

The Caliph's mouth was dry as bone,
He swept his beard aside to quaff:—
The news-reader beneath the throne,
Went droning on with *ghain* and *kaf*:—
The Caliph drew a mighty breath,
Just then the reader read a word—
And Mohtasim, as grim as death,
Set down the cup and snatched his sword.

"*Ann' amratan shureefatee!*"
"Speak clear!" cries angry Mohtasim;
"*Fe lasr ind' ilj min ulji*,"—
Trembling the newsman read to him
How in Ammoria, far from home,
An Arab girl of noble race
Was captive to a lord of Roum;
And how he smote her on the face,

And how she cried, for life afraid,
"Ya, Mohtasim! help, O my king!"
And how the Kafir mocked the maid,
And laughed, and spake a bitter thing,
"Call louder, fool! Mohtasim's ears
Are long as Barak's—if he heed—
Your prophet's ass; and when he hears,
He'll come upon a spotted steed!"

The Caliph's face was stern and red,
He snapped the lid upon the cup;
"Keep this same sherbet, slave," he said,
"Till such time as I drink it up.
Wallah! the stream my drink shall be,
My hollowed palm my only bowl,
Till I have set that lady free,
And seen that Roumi dog's head roll!"

At dawn the drums of war were beat,
Proclaiming, "Thus saith Mohtasim:
'Let all my valiant horsemen meet,
And every soldier bring with him

A spotted steed.'" So rode they forth,
A sight of marvel and of fear;
Pied horses prancing fiercely north,
Three lakhs—the cup borne in the rear!

When to Ammoria he did win,
He smote and drove the dogs of Roum,
And rode his spotted stallion in,
Crying, "*Labbayki!* I am come!"
Then downward from her prison-place
Joyful the Arab lady crept;
She held her hair before her face,
She kissed his feet, she laughed and wept.

She pointed where that lord was laid:
They drew him forth, he whined for grace:
Then with fierce eyes Mohtasim said—
"She whom thou smotest on the face
Had scorn, because she called her king:
Lo! he is come! and dost thou think
To live, who didst this bitter thing
While Mohtasim at peace did drink?"

Flashed the fierce sword—rolled the lord's head;
The wicked blood smoked in the sand.
"Now bring my cup!" the Caliph said.
Lightly he took it in his hand;
As down his throat the sweet drink ran
Mohtasim in his saddle laughed,
And cried, *Taïba asshrab alan!*
"By God! delicious is this draught!"

THE STRATFORD PILGRIMS.

"Ah! the troop at the Tabard Inn,
Manciple, Miller, and Frankelyn,
Tightening the girths, and draining the ale,
And away on their wild ride by river and dale!
Gone, Dan Chaucer! gone, but for thee
Is the clatter of that gay companie,
The rattle and ring of stirrup and spur,
Floating of plume, and folding of fur,
With the round of tales that held from town
To the sweet green slopes of the broad South Down.
Certes! with such it were pleasant indeed
To patter an Ave, or finger a bead,
And forth each dawn by the cock to wend
From shrine to shrine unto Albion's end;

But their day is done, and their course is run,
None goeth forth on a pilgrimage—none!"

"Well! but the woods are as green as then,
And the sunshine as splendid on grey rock and glen;
The linnet and missel-thrush sing, I trow,
With as rich a trill in their little throats now;
Rivers will ripple, and beech-boughs wave,
And the meadows be decked in a dress as brave,
And the great glad sky build a roof as blue,
Tho' it overarch only pilgrims two.
Sweetheart, come! let us do as they
Did in old time on as fair a day:
We lack but a chapel whereunto to wend,
A shrine and a saint for our journey's end;
And of that gay ride—the shrine, God wot,
Is the dusty goal that I envy them not."

"Nay, pardie!" quoth she that I love,
"Fit for thy mood as the hand for the glove,
Or the hilt of his sword for the soldier's fist,
Or a poet to be praised, or a lip to be kissed,

Far on yon path, by the emerald lea,
Fair Avon glideth adown to the sea;
By the walls of a church, beneath whose stones
Sleeps dust sacred as saintly bones,—
His whom thou lovest."
"Right good!" I said,
And forth a foot to the lea I led,
With staff and scrip and a spirit in tune
To the merry noise of a midsummer noon:—
Two we were of one heart and age
Going a pious pilgrimage.

Sooth! I doubt if palmers as gay
Ever set forth on so fair a way.
Sooth! I doubt if a day so rare
Ever made pilgrimage half so fair.
But, certes! never did palmers go
To holier shrine than where he lies low,
Who miracles wrought for heart and eye:
The wonder of Imogen's constancy,
The airy marvels of Prospero's isle,
The magic of Queen Cleopatra's smile;

Her barge that burned on the glowing water,
The patience and faith of Lear's leal daughter,
The Roman Portia's fond, firm heart,
And the Veronese lovers death did not part.
Something I laughed, Heav'n 'ield it me,
At Beckett and Benedict saints,—not he!
So came we on where the wayfarer sees
Far Warwick fading behind the trees,
And Guy's great castle behind the town,
That "setter up," and that "puller down."
For "Stratford—ho!" our green road lay,
And I spake with my heart in the ancient day:
"Sweet! thou art fair for a prioress,
And I am an 'Oxenforde clerke,' no less;
Tell out some fable of ancient day!
I rede you to prove that woman may
Be as true as man!"—"Benedicite!"
"Hearken my story and judge," quoth she.

VERNIER.

If ever thou shalt follow silver Seine
Through his French vineyards and French villages,
For love of love and pity turn aside
At Vernier, and bear to linger there!
The gentle river doth so—lingering long
Round the dark marshland, and the pool Grand'mer,
And then with slower ripple steals away
Down from his merry Paris. Do thou this;
'Tis kind to keep a memory of the dead,—
The bygone, silent dead; and these lie there,
Buried a twenty fathoms in the pool,
Whose rough cold wave is closed above their grave,
Like the black cover of an ancient book
Over a tearful story.

Very lovely
Was Julie de Montargis: even now—
After six hundred years are dead with her,
Her village name—the name a stranger hears—
Is, "La plus belle des belles;"—they tell him yet,
The glossy night-black pansies of the land

Lost depth in her dark hair; and that she owned
The noble Norman eye—the violet eye,
Almost—so far and fine its lashes drooped—
Darkened to purple:
All the country-folk
Went lightly to their work at sight of her;
And all their children learned a grace by heart,
And said it with small lips when she went by,
The Lady of the Castle.
Dear past words
Was all this beauty and this gentleness
Unto her first love and her playfellow,
Roland le Vavasour.
Too dear to leave,
Save that his knightly vow to pluck a palm,
And bear the cross broidered above his heart,
To where upon the cross Christ died for him,
Led him away from loving.
But a year,
And they shall meet—alas! to those that joy,
It is a pleasant season, all too short,
Made of white winter and of scarlet spring,

With fireside comfort and sweet summer-nights:
But parted lovers count the minutes up,
And see no sunshine.

Julie heeded none,
When she had belted on her Roland's sword,
Buckled his breastplate, and upon her lip
Taken his last long kisses.

Listen now!
She was no light-o'-love, to change and change,
And, deeply written on her heart, she kept
The night and hour the star of Love should see
A true love-meeting. Walking by the pool,
Many a time she longed to wear a wing,
As fleet and white as the swift sea-bird spread,
That she might hover over Roland's sails,
Follow him to the field, and in the battle
Shield the hot Syrian sun from dazing him:
High on the turret many an autumn eve,
When the light, merry swallow tried his plumes
For foreign flight, she gave him messages,—
Fond messages of love, for Palestine,
Unto her knight. What wonder, loving so,

She greeted well the brother that he sent
From Ascalon with spoils—Claude Vavasour?
Could she do less?—he had so deft a hand
Upon the mandolin, and sang so well
What Roland did so bravely; nay, in sooth,
She had not heart to frown upon his songs,
When they sang other love and other deeds
Than Roland's, being brother to her lord.
Yet sometimes was she grave and sad of eye,
For knowledge of the spell her glance could work
Upon its watcher. Ah! he came to serve,
And stayed to love her; and she knew it soon,
Past all concealment. Oftentimes his eyes,
Fastened upon her face, fell suddenly,
For brother-love and shame; but, once and twice,
Julie had seen them, through her tender tears,
Fixed on some messenger from Holy Land
With wild significance, the drawn white lips
Working for grief, because she smiled again.

He spake no love—he breathed no passionate tale,
Till there came one who told how Roland's sword,

From heel to point, dripped with the Paynim blood;
How Ascalon had watched, and Joppa's lists,
And Gaza, and Nicæa's noble fight,
His chivalry; and how, with palm-branch won,
Bringing his honours and his wounds a-front,
His prow was cleaving Genoa's sapphire sea,
Bound homewards. Then, the last day of the year,
Claude brought his unused charger to the gate,
Sprang to the broad strong back, and reined its rage
Into a marble stillness. Yet more still,
Young Claude le Vavasour, thy visage was,
More marble-white.

She stood to see him pass,
And their eyes met; and, full of tears were hers
To mark his suffering; and she called his name,
And came below the gate; but he bowed low,
And thrust the vizor close over his face,
So riding on.

Before St. Ouen's shrine
That night the lady watched—a sombre night,
With fleeting gleams of fitful moonlight sent
'Twixt driving clouds: the grey stone statues gleamed

Through the gloom ghost-like; the still effigies
Of knight and abbess had a show of life,
Lit by pale crimsons and faint amethysts
That fell along them from the oriels;
And if she broke the silence with a step,
It seemed the echo lent them speech again
To speak in ghostly whispers; while, o'er all,
With a weird paleness midnight might not hide,
Straight from the wall St. Ouen looked upon her,
Knitting his granite brows, bidding her hope
No lover's kiss that night—no loving kiss—
None—though there came the whisper of her name,
And a chill sleety blast of wintry wind
Moaning about the tombs, and striking her,
For fear, down to her knees.
That opened porch
Brought more than wind and whisper; there were steps,
And the dim wave of a white gaberdine—
Horribly dim; and then the voice again,
As though the dead called Julie. Was it dead,
The form which, at the holy altar foot,
Stood spectral in the flickering window-lights?

It does not turn, nor speak, nor seek for her,
But passes thro' the chancel, grim and still!
Ah, Holy Mother! dead—and in its hand
The pennon of Sir Roland, and the palm,
Both laid so stilly on the altar front;
A presence like a knight, clad in close mail
From spur to crest, yet from his armed heel
No footfall; a white face, white as the stones,
Lit by the moonlight long enough to know
How the dead kept his tryst; and It was gone,
Leaving the lady on the flags, ice-cold.

Oh, gentle River! thou that knowest all,
Tell them how for a while she mourned her Knight;
How her grief withered all the rose-bloom off,
And wrote its record on her fading cheek;
And say, bright River! lest they do her wrong,
All the sad story of those twenty moons,
The true-love dead—the true-love that lived on—
Her clinging memories, and Claude's generous praise,
Claude's silent service, and her tearful thanks;

And ask them, River, for Saint Charity,
To think not too much wrong, that so she gave,
Her heart being given and gone, her hand to him,
The Brother of her Lord.—
Now banish care!
Soothe it with flutings, startle it with drums!
Trick it with gold and velvets, till it glow
Into a seeming pleasure. Ah, vain! vain!
When the bride weeps, what wedding-gear is gay?
And since the dawn she weeps—at orisons
She wept—and while her women clasped the zone,
Among its jewels fell her mocking tears.
Now at the altar all her answers sigh;
Wilt thou?—Ah! fearful altar-memories—
Ah! spirit-lover—if he saw me now!
Wilt thou?—"Oh me! if that he saw me now!"
He doth, he doth! beneath St. Ouen there,
As white and still—*yon monk whose cowl is back!*
Wilt thou?—"Ah, dear love, listen and look up."
He doth—ah God! with hollow eyes a-fire.
Wilt thou?—pale quivering lips, pale bloodless lips—
"I will not—never—never—Roland—never!"

So went the bride a-swoon to Vernier;
So doffed each guest his silken braveries;
So followed Claude, heart-stricken and amazed,
And left the Chapel. But the monk left last,
And down the hill-side, swift and straight and lone,
Sandals and brown serge brushed the yellow broom,
Till to the lake he came and loosed his skiff,
And paddled to the lonely island-cell
Midway over the wavelets. Long ago
The people of the lonely water knew
He came alone to dwell there—'twas the night
Of Lady Julie's vigil; ever since
The simple fishers left their silver tithe
Of lake-fish for him on the wave-worn flags,
Wherefrom he wandered not, save when that day
He went unasked, and marred the bridal show,—
Wherefore none knew, nor how,—save two alone,
A lady swooning—and a monk at prayers.

And now not Castle-gates, nor cell, nor swoon,
Nor splashing waters, nor the flooded marsh,

Can keep these two apart. The Chapel-bells
Ring Angelus and Even-song, and then
Sleep, like her waiting maidens—only Blanche,
Her foster-sister, lying at the gate,
Dreaming of roving spirits—starts at one,
And marvels at the night-gear, poorly hid,
And overdone with pity at her plaint,
Lets her dear Lady forth, and watches her
Gleaming from crag to crag—but lost at last,
A white speck on the night.
More watchful eyes
Follow her flying;—down the water-path,
Mad at his broken bridals, sore amazed
With fear and pain, Claude tracks the wanderer—
Waits, while the wild white fingers loose the cord—
But when she drove the shallop through the lake
Straight for the island-cell, he brooked no stay,
But doffed his steel-coat on the reedy rim,
And gave himself to the quick-plashing pool,
And swimming in the foam her fleetness made,
Strove after—sometimes losing his white guide,
Down-sinking in the dark wash of the waves.

Together to the island-cell they come,
The shallop and the swimmer—she alone
Thrusts at the wicket,—enters wet and wild.
What sees he there under the crucifix?
What holds his eyesight to the ivied loop?
Oh, Claude!—oh furious heart! be still, or break!
The Monk and Julie kneeling, not at prayer!
She kisses him with warm, wild, eager lips—
Weeps on his heart—that woman, nearly wived,
And "Sweetest love," she saith, "I thought thee dead."
And he—who is he that he fondles so
In his her shaking hands, and bends adown,
Crying, "Ah, my lost love! it was no ghost
That left the palm-branch; but I saw thee not
In the dim moonlight of the midnight aisle;
And heard their talk of Claude, and held thee false,
These many erring days." Now, gaze no more,
Claude, Claude, for thy soul's peace! She binds the brand
About his gaberdine, with close caress;
She fondles the thin neck, and clasps thereon
The gorget! then the breast-piece and the helm

Her quick hands fasten. "Come away," she cries,
"Thou Knight, and take me from them all for thine.
Come, true-love! come." The pebbles, water-washed,
Grate with the gliding of the shallop's keel,
Scarce bearing up those twain.
Frail boat, be strong!
Three lives are thine to keep—ah, Lady pale,
Choose of two lovers—for the other comes
With a wild bound that shakes the rotten plank.
Moon! shine out clear for Claude's avenging blow!
She glitters on a quiet face and form
That shuns it not,—yet stays the lifted death.
"My brother Roland!"—"Claude, ah, brother mine!"—
"I thought thee dead!"—"I would that I had died
Ere this had come!"—"Just God! but she is thine!"—
"He wills her not for either! look, we fill,
The current drifts us, and the oars are gone,
I will leap forth!"—"Now by the breast we sucked,
So shalt thou not: let the black waters break
Over a broken heart!"—"Nay, tell him no;
Bid him to save thee, Julie—I will leap!"
So strove they sinking, sinking—Julie bending

Between them; and those brothers over her
With knees and arms close locked for leave to die
Each for the other;—while the Moon shone down,
Silvering their far-off home, and the black wave
That struck, and rose, and floated over them,
Hushing their death-cries, hiding their kind strife,
Ending the love of those great troubled hearts
With silence, save for lapping of the lake.

"Verily!" spake I, "a troubled dame!
Sweet! *grand' merci* for this same!
Tender and fair is the chronicle
That Vernier taught thee featly to tell!
Tenderer, fairer its lessons seem
From lips which speak and eyes which beam
So true a truth, and so fast a faith,
Oh Love, whom I love for life and for death!—
But thou in thy turn have heed to me;
I know a story of constancy
Where woman was changeful, and man was true:
Peradventure Kate! I shall tell it through

Before we come where Shakespeare's bones
Make holy walking of Stratford stones!

"Nay, but recount!" she softly said,
Doubtfully tossing a wilful head:
And hand in hand, in the shade of the limes,
I told this tale of the Saracen times.

KING SALADIN.

LONG years ago—so writes Boccaccio
In such Italian gentleness of speech
As finds no echo in this northern air
To counterpart its music—long ago,
When Saladin was Soldan of the East,
The kings let cry a general crusade;
And to the trysting-plains of Lombardy
The idle lances of the North and West
Rode all that spring, as all the spring runs down
Into a lake, from all its hanging hills,
The clash and glitter of a hundred streams.

Whereof the rumour reached to Saladin;
And that swart king—as royal in his heart

As any crownèd champion of the Cross—
That he might fully, of his knowledge, learn
The purpose of the lords of Christendom,
And when their war and what their armament,
Took thought to cross the seas to Lombardy.
Wherefore, with wise and trustful Amirs twain,
All habited in garbs that merchants use,
With trader's band and gipsire on the breasts
Which best loved mail and dagger, Saladin
Set forth upon his journey perilous.

In that day, lordly land was Lombardy!
A sea of country-plenty, islanded
With cities rich; nor richer one than thou,
Marble Milano! from whose gate at dawn—
With ear that little recked the matin-bell,
But a keen eye to measure wall and fosse—
The Soldan rode; and all day long he rode
For Pavia; passing basilic, and shrine,
And gaze of vineyard-workers, wotting not
Yon trader was the Lord of Heathenesse.
All day he rode; yet at the wane of day
No gleam of gate, or ramp, or rising spire,

Nor Tessin's sparkle underneath the stars
Promised him Pavia; but he was 'ware
Of a gay company upon the way,
Ladies and lords, with horses, hawks, and hounds;
Cap-plumes and tresses fluttered by the wind
Of merry race for home. "Go!" said the king
To one that rode upon his better hand,
"'And pray these gentles of their courtesy
How many leagues to Pavia, and the gates
What hour they close them?" Then the Saracen
Set spur, and being joined to him that seemed
First of the hunt, he told the message—they
Checking their jangling bits, and chiding down
The unfinished laugh, to listen—but by this
Came up the king, his bonnet in his hand,
Theirs doffed to him: "Sir Trader," Torel said
(Messer Torello 'twas, of Istria),
"They shut the Pavian gate at even-song,
And even-song is sung." Then, turning half,
Muttered, "Pardie, the man is worshipful,
A stranger too!" "Fair lord!" quoth Saladin,
"Please you to stead some weary travellers,

Saying where we may lodge, the town so far
And night so near." " Of my heart, willingly,"
Made answer Torel, " I did think but now
To send my knave an errand—he shall ride
And bring you into lodgment—oh! no thanks,
Our Lady keep you!" then with whispered hest
He called their guide and sped them. Being gone,
Torello told his purpose, and the band,
With ready zeal and loosened bridle-chains,
Rode for his hunting-palace, where they set
A goodly banquet underneath the planes,
And hung the house with guest-lights, and anon
Welcomed those wondering strangers, thereto led
Unwitting, by a world of winding paths;
Messer Torello, at the inner gate,
Waiting to take them in—a winsome host,
Stamped current with God's image for a man
Chief among men, truthful, and just, and free.

There he, " Well met again, fair sirs! Our knave
Hath found you shelter better than the worst:
Please you to leave your selles, and being bathed,
Grace our poor supper here." Then Saladin,

Whose sword had yielded ere his courtesy,
Answered, "Great thanks, Sir Knight, and this
much blame,
You spoil us for our trade! two bonnets doffed,
And travellers' questions holding you afield,
For such you give us this." "Sir! not your meed,
Nor worthy of your breeding; but in sooth
That is not out of Pavia." Thereupon
He led them to fair chambers decked with all
Makes tired men glad; lights, and the marble bath,
And flasks that sparkled, liquid amethyst,
And grapes, not dry as yet from evening dew.
Thereafter at the supper-board they sat;
Nor lacked it, though its guest was reared a king,
Worth provend in crafts of cookery,
Pastel, pasticcio—all set forth on gold;
And gracious talk and pleasant courtesies,
Spoken in stately Latin, cheated time
Till there was none but held that stranger-sir,
For all his chapman's dress of cramasie,
Goodlier than silks could make him. Presently
Talk rose upon the Holy Sepulchre:

"I go myself," said Torel, "with a score
Of better knights—the flower of Pavia—
To try our steel against King Saladin's.
Sirs! ye have seen the countries of the Sun,
Know you the Soldan?" Answer gave the king,
"The Soldan we have seen—'twill push him hard
If, which I nothing doubt, you Pavian lords
Are valorous as gentle;—we, alas!
Be Cyprus merchants making trade to France—
Dull sons of Peace." "By Mary!" Torel cried,
"But for thy word, I ne'er heard speech so fit
To lead the war, nor saw a hand that sat
Liker a soldier's where thy sword should be;
But sure I hold you sleepless!" Then himself
Playing the chamberlain, with torches borne,
Led them to restful beds, commending them
To sleep and God, Who hears—Allah or God—
When good men do his creatures charities.

At dawn the cock, and neigh of saddled steeds,
Broke the king's dreams of battle—not their own,
But goodly jennets from Torello's stalls,
Caparisoned to bear them; he their host

Up, with a gracious radiance like the sun,
To bid them speed. Beside him in the court
Stood Dame Adalieta; comely she,
And of her port as queenly, and serene
As if the braided gold about her brows
Had been a crown. Mutual good-morrow given,
Thanks said and stayed, the lady prayed her guest
To take a token of his sojourn there,
Marking her good-will, not his worthiness;
"A gown of miniver—these furbelows
Are silk I spun—my lord wears ever such—
A housewife's thought! but those ye love are far;
Wear it as given for them." Then Saladin—
"A precious gift, Madonna, past my thanks;
And—but thou shalt not hear a 'no' from me—
Past my receiving; yet I take it; we
Were debtors to your noble courtesy
Out of redemption—this but bankrupts us."
"Nay, sir,—God shield you!" said the knight and dame:
And Saladin, with phrase of gentilesse
Returned, or ever that he rode alone,

Swore a great oath in guttural Arabic,
An oath by Allah—startling up the ears
Of those three Christian cattle they bestrode—
That never yet was princelier-natured man,
Nor gentler lady;—and that time should see
For a king's lodging quittance royal repaid.

It was the day of the Passaggio:
Ashore the war-steeds champed the burnished bits;
Afloat the galleys tugged the mooring chains:
The town was out; the Lombard armourers—
Red-hot with riveting the helmets up,
And whetting axes for the heathen heads—
Cooled in the crowd which filled the squares and streets
To speed God's soldiers. At the nones that day
Messer Torello to the gate came down,
Leading his lady;—sorrow's hueless rose
Grew on her cheek, and thrice the destrier
Struck fire, impatient, from the pavement-squares,
Or ere she spoke, tears in her lifted eyes,
"Goest thou, lord of mine?" "Madonna, yes!"

Said Torel, "for my soul's weal and the Lord
Ride I to-day: my good name and my house
Reliant I intrust thee, and—because
It may be they shall slay me, and because,
Being so young, so fair, and so reputed,
The noblest will entreat thee—wait for me,
Widow or wife, a year, and month, and day;
Then, if thy kinsmen press thee to a choice,
And if I be not come, hold me for dead;
Nor link thy blooming beauty with the grave
Against thy heart." "Good my lord!" answered she,
"Hardly my heart sustains to let thee go;
Thy memory it can keep, and keep it will,
Though my one love, Torel of Istria,
Live, or ——" "Sweet, comfort thee! San Pietro speed!
I shall come home: if not, and worthy knees
Bend for this hand, whereof none worthy lives,
Least he who lays his last kiss thus upon it,
Look thee, I free it ——" "Nay!" she said, "but I,
A petulant slave that hugs her golden chain,

Give that gift back, and with it this poor ring:
Set it upon thy sword-hand, and in fight
Be merciful and win, thinking of me."
Then she, with pretty action, drawing on
Her ruby, buckled over it his glove—
The great steel glove—and through the helmet bars
Took her last kiss;—then let the chafing steed
Have its hot will and go.

But Saladin,
Safe back among his lords at Lebanon,
Well wotting of their quest, awaited it,
And held the Crescent up against the Cross.
In many a doughty fight Ferrara blades
Clashed with keen Damasc, many a weary month
Wasted afield; but yet the Christians
Won nothing nearer to Christ's sepulchre;
Nay, but gave ground. At last, in Acre pent,
On their loose files, enfeebled by the war,
Came stronger smiter than the Saracen—
The deadly Pest: day after day they died,
Pikeman and knight-at-arms; day after day
A thinner line upon the leaguered wall

Held off the heathen:—held them off a space;
Then, over-weakened, yielded, and gave up
The city and the stricken garrison.
So to sad chains and hateful servitude
Fell all those purple lords—Christendom's stars,
Once high in hope as soaring Lucifer,
Now low as sinking Hesper: with them fell
Messer Torello—never one so poor
Of all the hundreds that his bounty fed
As he in prison—ill-entreated, bound,
Starved of sweet light, and set to shameful tasks;
And that great load at heart to know the days
Fast flying, and to live accounted dead.
One joy his gaolers left him,—his good hawk;
The brave, gay bird that crossed the seas with him:
And often, in the mindful hour of eve,
With tameless eye and spirit masterful,
In a feigned anger checking at his hand,
The good grey falcon made his master cheer.

One day it chanced Saladin rode afield
With shawled and turbaned Amirs, and his hawks—

Lebanon-bred, and mewed as princes lodge—
Flew foul, forgot their feather, hung at wrist,
And slighted call. The Soldan, quick in wrath,
Bade slay the cravens, scourge the falconer,
And seek some wight who knew the heart of hawks,
To keep it hot and true. Then spake a Sheikh—
"There is a Frank in prison by the sea,
Far-seen herein." "Give word that he be brought,"
Quoth Saladin, "and bid him set a cast:
If he hath skill, it shall go well for him."

Thus, by the winding path of circumstance,
One palace held, as prisoner and prince,
Torello and his guest: unwitting each,
Nay and unwitting, though they met and spake
Of that goshawk and this—signors in serge,
And chapmen crowned, who knows?—till on a time
Some trick of face, the manner of some smile,
Some gleam of sunset from the glad days gone,
Caught the king's eye, and held it. "Nazarene!
What native art thou?" asked he. "Lombard I,
A man of Pavia." "And thy name?" "Torel,

Messer Torello called in happier times,
Now best uncalled." "Come hither, Christian!"
The Soldan said, and led the way, by court
And hall and fountain, to an inner room
Rich with king's robes: therefrom he reached a gown,
And "Know'st thou this?" he asked. "High lord! I might
Elsewhere," quoth Torel, "here 'twere mad to say
Yon gown my wife unto a trader gave
Who shared our board." "Nay, but that gown is this,
And she the giver, and the trader I,"
Quoth Saladin; "I! twice a king to-day,
Owing a royal debt and paying it."
Then Torel, sore amazed, "Great lord, I blush,
Remembering how the Master of the East
Lodged sorrily." "It's Master's Master thou!"
Gave answer Saladin, "come in and see
What wares the Cyprus traders keep at home;
Come forth and take thy place, Saladin's friend!"
Therewith into the circle of his lords,
With gracious mien the Soldan led his slave;
And while the dark eyes glittered, seated him

First of the full divan. "Orient lords,"
So spake he,—"let the one who loves his king
Honour this Frank, whose house sheltered your king;
He is my brother:" then the night-black beards
Swept the stone floor in ready reverence,
Agas and Amirs welcoming Torel:
And a great feast was set, the Soldan's friend
Royally garbed, upon the Soldan's hand,
Shining, the bright star of the banqueters.

All which, and the abounding grace and love
Shown him by Saladin; a little held
The heart of Torel from its Lombard home
With Dame Adalieta: but it chanced
He sat beside the king in audience,
And there came one who said, "Oh, Lord of lords,
That galley of the Genovese which sailed
With Frankish prisoners is gone down at sea."
"Gone down!" cried Torel. "Ay! what recks it, friend,
To fall thy visage for?" quoth Saladin;

"One galley less to ship-stuffed Genoa!"
"Good my liege!" Torel said, "it bore a scroll
Inscribed to Pavia, saying that I lived;
For in a year, a month, and day, not come,
I bade them hold me dead; and dead I am,
Albeit living, if my lady wed,
Perchance constrained." "Certes," spake Saladin,
"A noble dame—the like not won, once lost—
How many days remain?" "Ten days, my prince,
And twelvescore leagues between my heart and me:
Alas! how to be passed?" Then Saladin—
"Lo! I am loath to lose thee—wilt thou swear
To come again if all go well with thee,
Or come ill speeding?" "Yea, I swear, my king,
Out of true love," quoth Torel, "heartfully."
Then Saladin, "Take here my signet-seal;
My admiral will loose his swiftest sail
Upon its sight; and cleave the seas, and go
And clip thy dame, and say the Trader sends
A gift, remindful of her courtesies."
Passed were the year, and month, and day; and passed

Out of all hearts but one Sir Torel's name,
Long given for dead by ransomed Pavians:
For Pavia, thoughtless of her Eastern graves,
A lovely widow, much too gay for grief,
Made peals from half a hundred campaniles
To ring a wedding in. The seven bells
Of Santo Pietro, from the nones to noon,
Boomed with bronze throats the happy tidings out;
Till the great tenor, overswelled with sound,
Cracked itself dumb. Thereat the sacristan,
Leading his swinkèd ringers down the stairs,
Came blinking into sunlight—all his keys
Jingling their little peal about his belt—
Whom, as he tarried, locking up the porch,
A foreign signor, browned with southern suns,
Turbaned and slippered, as the Muslims use,
Plucked by the cope. "Friend," quoth he—'twas a tongue
Italian true, but in a Muslim mouth—
"Why are your belfries busy—is it peace
Or victory, that so ye din the ears
Of Pavian lieges?" "Truly, no liege thou!"

Grunted the sacristan, "who knowest not
That Dame Adalieta weds to-night
Her fore-betrothed,—Sir Torel's widow she,
That died i' the chain?" "To-night!" the stranger said.
"Ay, sir, to-night!—why not to-night?—to-night!
And you shall see a goodly Christian feast
If so you pass their gates at even-song,
For all are asked."
No more the questioner,
But folded o'er his face the Eastern hood,
Lest idle eyes should mark how idle words
Had struck him home. "So quite forgot!—so soon!—
And this the square wherein I gave the joust,
And that the loggia, where I fed the poor;
And yon my palace, where—oh, fair! oh, false!—
They robe her for a bridal. Can it be?
Clean out of heart, with twice six flying moons,
The heart that beat on mine as it would break,
That faltered forty oaths. Forced! forced!—not false—
Well! I will sit, wife, at thy wedding-feast,
And let mine eyes give my fond faith the lie."

So in the stream of gallant guests that flowed
Feastward at eve, went Torel; passed with them
The outer gates, crossed the great courts with them,
A stranger in the walls that called him lord.
Cressets and coloured lamps made the way bright,
And rose-leaves strewed to where within the doors
The master of the feast, the bridegroom, stood,
A-glitter from his forehead to his foot,
Speaking fair welcomes. He, a courtly sir,
Marking the Eastern guest, bespoke him sweet,
Prayed place for him, and bade them set his seat
Upon the dais. Then the feast began,
And wine went free as wit, and music died—
Outdone by merrier laughter:—only one
Nor ate nor drank, nor spoke nor smiled; but gazed
On the pale bride, pale as her crown of pearls,
Who sate so cold and still, and sad of cheer,
At the bride-feast.

But of a truth, Torel
Read the thoughts right that held her eyelids down,
And knew her loyal to her memories.

Then to a little page who bore the wine,
He spake, "Go tell thy lady thus from me:
In mine own land, if any stranger sit
A wedding-guest, the bride, out of her grace,
In token that she knows her guest's good-will,
In token she repays it, brims a cup,
Wherefrom he drinking she in turn doth drink;
So is our use." The little page made speed
And told the message. Then that lady pale—
Ever a gentle and a courteous heart—
Lifted her troubled eyes and smiled consent
On the swart stranger. By her side, untouched,
Stood the brimmed gold; "Bear this," she said,
"and pray
He hold a Christian lady apt to learn
A kindly lesson." But Sir Torel loosed
From off his finger—never loosed before—
The ring she gave him on the parting day;
And ere he drank, behind his veil of beard
Dropped in the cup the ruby, quaffed, and sent.—
So she, with sad smile, set her lips to drink;
And—something in the Cyprus touching them—

Glanced—gazed—the ring!—her ring!—Jove! how
she eyes
The wistful eyes of Torel!—how, heartsure,
Under all guise knowing her lord returned,
She springs to meet him coming!—telling all
In one great cry of joy.
Good Lord! the rout,
The storm of questions! stilled, when Torel spake
His name, and, known of all, claimed the Bride Wife
Maugre the wasted feast, and woful groom.
All hearts save his were light to see Torel;
But Adalieta's lightest, as she plucked
The bridal-veil away. Something therein—
A lady's dagger—small, and bright, and fine—
Clashed out upon the marble. "Wherefore that?"
Asked Torel; answered she, "I knew you true;
And I could live, so long as I might wait;
But they—they pressed me hard! my days of grace
Ended to-night—and I had ended too,
Faithful to death, if so thou hadst not come."

"God quit all gentle lovers," quoth she,
"And give them grace for their constancy,
For, dost thou not, from Boccace, prove
That true-love ever begetteth love?
Peace have they now in the changeless rest
Where he is gone, whom thou lovest best,
The Master of poets, whose own words prove
It 'never ran smooth,' the 'course of love!'
Since this is Stratford, and yonder wave
Is lilied Avon's, which girdles his grave!"

So came we, two of one heart and age
Making our pious pilgrimage!

THE RAJAH'S RIDE.

A PUNJAB SONG.

Now is the Devil-horse come to Sindh!
Wah! wah! Gooroo!—that is true!
His belly is stuffed with the fire and the wind,
But a fleeter steed had Runjeet Dehu!

It's forty koss from Lahore to the ford,
Forty and more to far Jummoo;
Fast may go the Feringhee lord,
But never so fast as Runjeet Dehu!

Runjeet Dehu was King of the Hill,
Lord and eagle of every crest;
Now the swords and the spears are still,
God will have it—and God knows best!

Rajah Runjeet sate in the sky,
Watching the loaded Kafilas in;
Affghan, Kashmeree, passing by,
Paid him pushm to save their skin.

Once he caracoled into the plain,
Wah! the sparkle of steel on steel!
And up the pass came singing again
With a lakh of silver borne at his heel.

Once he trusted the Mussulman's word,
Wah! wah! trust a liar to lie!
Down from his eyrie they tempted my Bird,
And clipped his wings that he could not fly.

Fettered him fast in far Lahore,
Fast by the gate at the Runchenee Pûl;
Sad was the soul of Chunda Kour,
Glad the merchants of rich Kurnool.

Ten months Runjeet lay in Lahore—
Wah! a hero's heart is brass!
Ten months never did Chunda Kour
Braid her hair at the tiring-glass.

There came a steed from Toorkistan,
Wah! God made him to match the hawk!
Fast beside him the four grooms ran,
To keep abreast of the Toorkman's walk.

Black as the bear on Iskardoo;
Savage at heart as a tiger chained;
Fleeter than hawk that ever flew,
Never a Muslim could ride him reined.

"Runjeet Dehu! come forth from thy hold"—
Wah! ten months had rusted his chain!
"Ride this Sheitan's liver cold"—
Runjeet twisted his hand in the mane;

Runjeet sprang to the Toorkman's back,
Wah! a king on a kingly throne!
Snort, black Sheitan! till nostrils crack,
Rajah Runjeet sits, a stone.

Three times round the Maidan he rode,
Touched its neck at the Kashmeree wall,
Struck the spurs till they spirted blood,
Leapt the rampart before them all!

Breasted the waves of the blue Ravee,
Forty horsemen mounting behind,
Forty bridle-chains flung free,—
Wah! wah! better chase the wind!

Chunda Kour sate sad in Jummoo:—
Hark! what horse-hoof echoes without?
"Rise! and welcome Runjeet Dehu—
Wash the Toorkman's nostrils out!

"Forty koss he has come, my life!
Forty koss back he must carry me;
Rajah Runjeet visits his wife,
He steals no steed like an Afreedee.

"They bade me teach them how to ride—
Wah! wah! now I have taught them well!"
Chunda Kour sank low at his side;
Rajah Runjeet rode the hill.

When he came back to far Lahore—
Long or ever the night began—
Spake he, "Take your horse once more,
He carries well—when he bears a man!"

Then they gave him a khillut and gold,
All for his honour and grace and truth;
Sent him back to his mountain-hold—
Muslim manners have touch of ruth;

Sent him back, with dances and drum—
Wah! my Rajah Runjeet Dehu!
To Chunda Kour and his Jummoo home—
Wah! wah! Futtee!—wah, Gooroo!

A BIHARI MILL-SONG.

Of eight great beams the boat was wrought,
With four red row-pins;—*Hu-ri-jee!*
When Mirza Saheb spied at the Ghaut
Bhagbati bathing:—*Hu-ri-jee!*

"Oh, girls! that hither your chatties bring,
Who is this bathing?"—*Hu-ri-jee!*
"The Head of our village is Horil Singh;
'Tis the Raja's sister!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*

"Run thou, Barber!—and, Peon! run thou;
Bring hither that Rajpût!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*
"Oh, girls! who carry the chatties, now,
Which is his dwelling?"—*Hu-ri-jee!*

"The dwelling of Horil Singh looks north,
And north of the door is a sandal-tree:"—
With arms fast-bound they brought him forth;
"Salaam to the Mirza!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*

"Take, Horil Singh, this basket of gold,
And give me thy sister, sweet Bhagbati."
"Fire burn thy basket!" he answered, bold,—
"My sister's a Rajpût!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*

Horil's wife came down from her house;
She weeps in the courtyard: "Cursëd be,
Oh, sister-in-law, thy beautiful brows!
My husband is chained for them!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*

"Now, sister-in-law! of thy house keep charge,
And the duties therein:" quoth Bhagbati;
"For Horil Singh shall be set at large,
I go to release him!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*

When Bhagbati came to the Mirza's hall
Low she salaamed to him:—*Hu-ri-jee!*
"The fetters of Horil Singh let fall,
If, Mirza," she said, "thou desirest me."

"If, Mirza," she said, "thou wouldst have my love,
Dye me a bride-cloth;"—*Hu-ri-jee!*
"Saffron beneath and vermilion above,
Fit for a Rajpût!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*

"If, Mirza," she said, "I am fair in thine eyes,
And mine is thy heart, now,"—*Hu-ri-jee!*
"Command me jewels of rich device,
Fit for a Rajpût!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*

"If, Mirza," she said, "I must do this thing,
Quitting my people,"—*Hu-ri-jee!*
"The palanquin and the bearers bring,
That I go not afoot from them!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*

Smiling, he bade the dyers haste
To dye her a bride-cloth:—*Hu-ri-jee!*
Weeping—weeping, around her waist
Bhagbati bound it.—*Hu-ri-jee!*

Smiling, he bought, from the goldsmith's best,
Jewels unparalleled:—*Hu-ri-jee!*
Weeping, weeping—on neck and breast
Bhagbati clasped them.—*Hu-ri-jee!*

Joyously smiling, "Bring forth," he cried,
"My gilded palanquin!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*
Bitterly sorrowing, entered the bride,
Beautiful Bhagbati.—*Hu-ri-jee!*

A koss and a half of a koss went they,
And another koss after;—*Hu-ri-jee!*
Then Bhagbati thirsted: "Bearers, stay!
I would drink at the tank here!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*

"Take from my cup," the Mirza said:
"Oh, not to-day will I take!" quoth she:
"For this was my father's tank, who is dead,
And it soon will be distant!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*

She quaffed one draught from her hollowed palm,
And again she dipped it;—*Hu-ri-jee!*
Then leaped in the water, dark and calm,
And sank from the sight of them.—*Hu-ri-jee!*

Sorely the Mirza bewailed, and hid
His face in his cloth, for rage to be
So mocked: "See, now, in all she did
Bhagbati fooled me!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*

Grieving, the Mirza cast a net
Dragging the water;—*Hu-ri-jee!*
Only shells and weeds did he get,
Shells and bladder-weeds.—*Hu-ri-jee!*

Laughing, a net cast Horil Singh,
Dragging the water;—*Hu-ri-jee!*
Lo! at the first sweep, up they bring
Dead, cold Bhagbati—fair to see!

Laughing, homeward the Rajpût wends,
Chewing his betel; "for now," quoth he,
"In honour this leap of Bhagbati ends
Ten generations!"—*Hu-ri-jee!*

HINDOO FUNERAL SONG.

CALL on Rama! call to Rama!
Oh, my brothers, call on Rama!
For this Dead
Whom we bring,
Call aloud to mighty Rama!

As we bear him, oh, my brothers,
Call together, very loudly,
That the Bhûts
May be scared;
That his spirit pass in comfort.

Turn his feet now, calling "Rama,"
Calling "Rama," who shall take him
When the flames
Make an end:
Ram! Ram!—oh, call to Rama!

SONG OF THE SERPENT CHARMERS.

COME forth, oh, Snake! come forth, oh, glittering Snake!
Oh shining, silent, deadly Nâg! appear,
Dance to the music that we make,
This serpent-song, so sweet and clear,
Blown on the beaded gourd, so clear,
So soft and clear.

Oh, dread Lord Śnake! come forth and spread thy hood,
And drink the milk and suck the eggs; and show
Thy tongue; and own the tune is good:
Hear, Maharaj! how hard we blow!
Ah, Maharaj! for thee we blow;
See how we blow!

Great Uncle Snake! creep forth and dance to-day!
This music is the music snakes love best;
Taste the warm white new milk, and play
Standing erect, with fangs at rest,
Dancing on end, sharp fangs at rest,
Fierce fangs at rest.

Ah, wise Lord Nâg! thou comest!—Fear thou not!
We make salaam to thee, the Serpent-King,
Draw forth thy folds, knot after knot;
Dance, Master! while we softly sing;
Dance, Serpent! while we play and sing,
We play and sing.

Dance, dreadful King! whose kisses strike men dead;
Dance this side, mighty Snake! the milk is here!
[*They seize the Cobra by the neck.*]
Ah, *shabash!* pin his angry head!
Thou fool! this nautch shall cost thee dear;
Wrench forth his fangs! this piping clear
It costs thee dear!

SONG OF THE FLOUR-MILL.

TURN the merry mill-stone, Gunga!
Pour the golden grain in;
Those that twist the Churrak fastest
The cakes soonest win:
Good stones, turn!
The fire begins to burn;
Gunga, stay not!
The hearth is nearly hot.
Grind the hard gold to silver,
Sing quick to the stone;
Feed its mouth with dal and bajri,
It will feed us anon.

Sing, Gunga! to the mill-stone,
It helps the wheel hum;

Blithesome hearts and willing elbows
Make the fine meal come:
Handsful three
For Gopal, you, and me;
Now it falls white,
Good stones, bite!
Drive it round and round, my Gunga!
Sing soft to the stone;
Better corn and churrak-working
Than idleness and none.

[NOTE.—The above three songs were written to native Hindoo melodies.]

"STUDENTS' DAY" IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

OUT of all the hundred fair Madonnas
Seen in many a rich and distant city—
Sweet Madonnas, with the mother's bosoms;
Glad Madonnas, with the eyes of anguish;
Rapt Madonnas, caught in clouds to heaven—
(Clouds of golden, glad, adoring Angels—)
She of Florence, in the chair,—so perfect!
She that was the "Grand Duke's" wealth and glory,
She that makes the picture "of the Goldfinch,"
Ghirlandajo's, with the cloak and jewels;
Guido's Queen, whom men and angels worship,
Della Robbia's best; and that sweet "Perla"—
Seville's bright boast—Mary of Murillo,

(Painted—so they vow—"with milk and roses.")
Guido Reni's Quadro at Bologna,
Munich's masterpiece, grim Durer's Goddess;
Yes! and thy brave work—Beltraffio mio!—
Many as the lessons are I owe them,
Thanks and wonder; worship; grateful memories,
Oftenest I shall think of Perugino's.

Do you know it? Either side a triptych
Stands an armed Archangel—as to guard her—
Glorious—with great wings, and shining armour:
In the middle panel, pure and tender,
Clasping close her hands, with adoration,
(All the Mother's love—the Mortal's worship—
In their yearning, in their reverence, painted)
Gazes Mary on the Child. A seraph
Holds Him, smiling, at her knees; and, smiling,
Looks she down, with spirit humbly-happy,
Full—to heart's brim—of the Peace of Heaven.
Reverence mingles with the Mother's passion,
But no touch of sadness, or of doubting.
Far away a river runneth seaward,

(Little now—like Truth—like Truth, to widen)
Leads the light across a blue dim country,
Under peaks—by forests—to the ocean:
Soft and warm, a pearly sky broods over
Where three Winged-Ones, at the Father's footstool,
Sing the "peace and good-will" song to mortals.

If you ask me why that Perugino
Of the rest can never be forgotten
Let this serve: I learned a lesson by it,
Watching one whose light and faithful fingers—
Following touch by touch her lovely labour—
Caught the Master's trick, and made him modern.
While she bent above her new Madonna,
Laid the splendid smalts, and touched the crimsons,
Swept the shadows under the gilt tresses,
Smoothed the sinless brows, and drooped the eyelids,—
What the Master did, so also doing,—
I bethought me "True and good the toil is!
Noble thus to double gifts of beauty!
Yet, alas! this 'peace and good-will' anthem,—
If the dear Madonna knew what ages—

Slowly following ages—would creep o'er us,
And those words be still as wind that passes,
Breathing fragrance from a land we know not,
Sighing music to a tune we catch not,
Stirring hearts, as leaves, i' the night, a little
Shake, and sleep again, and wait for sunlight,
(Sweet, glad sunlight! oh, so long a-coming!)
Would she smile so? I had painted rather—
(While she listened to those singing Angels,)
Mary, with a sword-blade in her bosom,
(Sword that was to pierce her heart, of all hearts!)
I had shown her with deep eyes of trouble,
Half afraid to credit that Evangel;
I had limned her 'pondering all those sayings,'
All our later agonies foreseeing,
After all our years have heard 'the tidings.'"

But the Artist, painting bold and largely,
Washing soft and clear the broadening colours;
With a liberal brush, at skilful working,
Linking lights and shadows on the visage,
Dropped by hazard there, one drop of water!

"Lo, a tear!" I thought; "that teaches Pietro!
That is wiser than the Master's wisdom!
Now the picture's meaning will be perfect!
For she could not be so calm—Christ's Mother—
Could she? even though Archangels kept her!
Could she? even though those sang in Heaven!
Knowing how her world would roll beyond them,
Twenty centuries past this sacred moment,
Out of sound of this angelic singing;
Loaded with the wrongs Christ's justice rights not,
Reddened with the blood Christ's teachings staunch not,
Reeking with the tears Christ's pity stays not:
Let the tear shine there! it suits the story!
Tear and smile go wondrous well together!
Seeing that this song was sung by Angels;
Seeing that the foolish world gainsays it.
That one lustrous drop completes the picture!
You forgot it! Peter of Perugia!"

Ah! I did not know an Artist's wisdom!
I had still to learn my deepest lesson:
She I watched, with better thought inspired,

Took some tender colour in her pencil,
(Faint dawn-colour,—blush of rose—I marked not!)
Touched the tear, and melted it to brightness,
Spread it in a heavenly smile all over,
Magically made it turn to service;
Till that tear, charged with its rosy tintings,
Deepened the first sweet smile, and left it lovelier,—
Like the Master's work, complete, sufficient!

Then I thought: "Pietro's wise Madonna
Was too wise to weep at little sorrows!
Christ, and She, and Heaven, and all the angels
Last;—'tis sin, and grief, alone which passes!
Roses grow of dew, and smiles from weeping!
Sweetest smile is made of saddest tear-drop!
She hath not forgotten we shall suffer!
In her heart that sword—to the heft—is planted,
But beyond the years, she sees Time over;
Past the Calvary she counts 'the mansions.'
Dear Madonna!—wise to be so happy!
Should you weep, because we have not listened?
We shall listen! and His Mother knows it!"

This is why—of many rare Madonnas,—
Most of all I think on Perugino's;
I who know so many more and love them!
This is why I thank my gentle artist,
She who taught me that, a student's wisdom!

THE KNIGHT'S TOMB AT SWANSCOMBE CHURCH.

WHERE, through western windows, dieth—
Gold and rose—the sunset's light,
With his dame, in marble, lieth
Andrew Weldon, armëd Knight:
Side by side, the legend sayeth,
These two lived and died:
Seemeth it most fair and fit
To rest so, side by side.

Nothing here, above or under,
Of fanatic gloom;
No fool's fear of death's deep wonder
Spoils their simple tomb:

Seems it that the sculptor carved it
Only for to show
What the Lady and the Knight were
Now they are not so.

Silvery twitters of swift swallows
Reach them, flashing by;
Shadows of the spear-leaved sallows
On their foreheads lie,
Shadows of the flickering sallows,
Of the fragrant limes,
Waving to-day as green and gay
As in their vanished times.

Fair, be sure, was this great lady,
Eyes, I guess, whose blue,
Cold and calm, but beaming steady,
Tender seemed and true.
Certes! of a noble presence,
Dutiful and staid,
Worthinesse was glad before her,
Worthlessnesse dismayed.

Read beneath, in golden letters
Proudly written down,
Names of all her "sonnes and daughteres!"
Each a matron-crown:
Deftly carved in ruff and wimple,
Kneeling figures show
Small heads over smaller, rising
In a solemn row.

These her triumphs:—sterner token
Chronicles her Lord!
Hangs above him, grim and broken,
Gilded helm and sword:
Sometimes, when with quire and organ
All the still air swings,
Red with the rust, and grey with the dust,
Low rattles the blade, and rings.

Time was, Knight, that tiny treble,
Should have stirred thy soul
More than drums and trumpets rebel
Braying after Noll:

No more fight, now!—nay, nor flight, now!
The rest which thou hast given
In chancel-shade to yon good blade
God gives thy soul in Heaven.

Somewhere on this summer morning
In this English isle,
Gleams a cheek whose soft adorning,
Lady! wears thy smile!
Some one in the Realm, whose fathers
Suffered much and long,
Owes that sword and its good Lord
Thanks for a righted wrong.

Therefore for that maiden pray I
Dame! God thee assoil!
Therefore for that freeman say I
Knight! God quit thy toil!
And for all Christian men—and me—
Grace from the gracious Lord
To write our name with no more shame,
And sheath as clean a sword.

June 1857.

ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.

"ILICET."

In Roman households, when their dear ones died,
Thrice by his name the living called the dead;
And, silence only answering as they cried,
Ilicet!—"go thou then!"—the mourners said.

Ilicet! let her part! the Poet's child,
Herself a mistress of the lyric song:
Ilicet!—to a world so sad and wild
To wish her back were far less love than wrong.

Ilicet! hard the word for those to say
Who know what gentleness is gone from earth;
Harder for those whose dwelling, day by day,
Shone with her presence—echoed to her mirth:

Yet, if HE wills it—whom she soars to meet
—The Lord of this world's vineyard—shall we ask
Who toil on, in the burden and the heat,
A later wage for her—a longer task?

Ilicet! let her go! though it were brave,—
In the hot vintage, where the strongest fail,
Weeding God's grapes from thistles—still to have
Her silver hymns o'er weariness prevail!

To hear her gentle, certain, spirit of ruth
Share its great sureties with less happy brothers,
And—from eyes bright with Heav'n's light—teach the truth
Of "*little children pleading for their mothers.*"

Ilicet! Otherwhere they need those strains,
Sounding so true for men—albeit low;
A throne was vacant (though its steps were pains),
For a soul, tried, pure, perfect—let her go!

Sigh not "so young!"—"such promise!"—"ah! a flower
That longer life had sunned to fruit of gold!"

Be still and see!—God's year, and day, and hour,
By lapse of mortal minutes is not told.

Who go are called—*ilicet!* let her go!
Though a sweet harp is silent in the land,
A soft voice hushed—and, never more below,
Poet and poet's child join song and hand.

Ilicet! ilicet! nos ibimus!—
To that divinest region of the skies,
Whence with clear sight she sees, knows, pities us,
We shall attain!—Vex not the dead with sighs.

THE THREE ROSES.

"Three roses, wan as moonlight, and weighed down
Each with its loveliness as with a crown,
Drooped in a florist's window in a town.
The first a lover bought. It lay at rest,
Like flower on flower that night, on beauty's breast.
The second rose, as virginal and fair,
Shrank in the tangles of a harlot's hair.
The third a widow, with new grief made wild,
Shut in the icy palm of her dead child."

—ALDRICH, *Flower and Thorn.*

THESE Roses (in the world we do not see)
Strove for the palm. Thus spake the beauteous Three:

THE MAIDEN'S ROSE.

I AM the happiest flower. I lay
Dying, as suits sweet blossoms best;
It was not pain to pass away
Upon her warm and fragrant breast.

Blossom on blossoms, so we slept;
My odours richer with her breath,
My white leaves whitest where I crept
Closer, to die delightful death.

I heard her secrets, pure and soft;
She kissed me, prayed for him, and laid
His gift where, since, his cheek full oft
Nestles; he knows what words she said:

And how, when morn ope'd the bright eyes,
She locked me in a casket close;
Nothing can take away my prize,
The kiss she gave her faded Rose.

The crown, fair sisters! I must hold;
I died upon that heavenly bed;
She buried me in silk and gold;
I made them lovers, being dead.

THE WIDOW'S ROSE.

I AM the wisest Rose: there lay
A dew-drop on me when she shut
The little ice-cold palm, and put
My blossom there to fade away.

It was a tear for her and me
That she should grieve, and I should go
Clasped in a hand that did not know,
And set to eyes that could not see;

Torn from my garden green and bright,
As he too; first-born of her spring,
Once flower-fair, now a lost, dead thing,
Hidden with me in graveyard night.

But, lo! it was not thus at all!
I did not think that flowers could see
The wonder of the worlds to be,
When the poor leaves of this life fall.

For while they wept, and sadly threw
The black earth on our coffin-lid,
A light came there where we were hid,
A wind breathed softer than I knew.

There shine no sunbeams so on earth,
There is no air blows in such wise
As this that swept from Paradise,
And turned grave-gloom to grace and mirth.

I saw him rise unspeakably;
I saw how subtle Life receives
New gifts from Death. It was but leaves—
Dead leaves—we left there, I and he.

And clasped in that small hand I came—
A spirit-Rose as he was spirit—
The further marvels to inherit
Of Life, which is for all the same.

Crown me, white sisters! When she bent—
That tender mother by his grave—
'Twas I who, with a rose-waft, gave
The thought that filled her with content.

THE HARLOT'S ROSE.

I WAS the blessed flower! Give back
The crown, dear sisters! for you lack
My joy—you! that her bosom bore;
You they entombed!—my deeper lore.

'Twas sweet in lovely death to fade,
Rose-blossom on rose-bosom laid;
'Twas rare in grasp of Death, to see
The flower of Life blow changelessly.

But I, most happy of all three,
Rejoiće for what he did to me;
Binding my bud on locks that rolled
Their wasted wealth in rippled gold.

For loveless love he set me there;
With thankless thanks she found me fair;
Laughed with sad eyes to hear him tell
The gold, with white and green, "went well."

We did our kind: she to bestow
God's grace in her rich beauty so
That good grew evil; I to scent
Her steps, and be Sin's ornament.

Yet 'twas my duty to seem sweet,
She had such bitter bread to eat!
She put me at her breast—I heard
Her heart-beats speaking, without word.

"Each spring I plucked such long ago,"
She said—"Ah, God! if we could grow
Clean like spring roses—white again—
Forgetting last year's rain and stain!"

She said—"Ah, God! ah, mother!—some
Are blooming so about my home,
The home-scent makes me dream—let be!
I have no lover that loves me."

"What was it that we read in class?
'*And she supposing Him*'—alas!
'*The gardener.*' Fool! as if God's Son
Cares for the flowers that are done!"

Thereat our lips and leaves did kiss—
I was as sweet and soft in this
To her as any Rose could be—
"God's flowers forgive!" she sighed—"Doth He?"

And fondling me, as though she felt
Her mother's kisses on her melt,
The tear-drops from her painted lids
Ran on the rouge. "What eye forbids,"

She said, "to try if any hear?"
Mocking herself, she sighed this prayer:
"Oh, Christ! I am Thy wilted Rose,
Renew me! Thou renewest those!"

Then laughed,—but did not see, as I,
The angels gather at her cry,
Their fine plots weaving out of sight
To help this soul that strove aright.

She did not feel the great wings fold
Thenceforward o'er her locks of gold;
Nor know thenceforward that the place
Was sentinelled by Shapes of grace.

But when again she bound her hair,
And set me in its tresses fair,
I did not "shrink," (as he has said :)
I was too proud! for we were led

By holy hands through lane and street,
Past things to speak of is not meet;
Till when the tender plot had place,
God's mercy met her face to face.

In all this earth there is not one
So desolate and so undone,
Who hath not rescue if they knew
A heart-cry goes the whole world through.

Of thousands cruel one was kind;
We found the hand she could not find;
The fragrance of me brought her cry—
We saved her; those Wise Ones and I,

I and her angels! She hath rest!
Of all Rose-service mine was best.
Oh, sisters white! no longer boast;
Give me the crown! My joy was most!

ALLA MANO DELLA MIA DONNA.

LISTEN! poets, loving-hearted,
Here abiding—hence departed;
Ye who ranged the realms above
Seeking symbols of your love;
Provence bards and Persian Saadis
Eloquently lauding ladies;
Frauenlob—the Minnesinger
Mourned of maidens,—and that bringer
Of delight to camp and grove,
Camoens, the Lord of love;
Praise as proudly as ye list,
All the honied lips ye kissed;
Vaunt your true loves' violet eyes,
Vow them bluer than the skies;

Swear no south-wind ever came
Sweet and soft as she you name;
Nor no lily ever grew
White as that which bloomed for you!
Look! I fling you down a glove
In one dear name that I love—
Never hand so fair and fine
As my lady's—Katharine.

Yes! I know it—Father Homer!
Too long in thy rolls a roamer
Not to know how radiant mighty
Rose the sea-born Aphrodite;
Yes! I know the pearly splendour
Of that hand, whose curvings tender,
Silver glinting under gold,
Combed away the sea-foam bold.
And I worship, bending low,
Herë's awful arm of snow;
And of mortal boldness shorn
Hail the Rosy-fingered Morn;
But those Gods above the thunder

Are for fear and reverent wonder;
She whose gentle hand I praise
Woman is, with woman's ways,
And I hold this gage of mine
None a hand—like Katharine.

All the bards that lips have kissed
Enter angry on the list,
And the legions that appear,
Might move any heart to fear.
Lo! Athenian Sophocles—
Virgil, too, my fancy sees—
And I sink my spear-head bright
As beseemeth younger knight;
And I kneel, but not to yield,
For I keep the tented field—
Vowing no such hand was seen
Were Electra twice a Queen,
And Lavinia's hue as fair
As 'twas bragged in Latin air:
Nay, nor faulter for Sybilla,
Or the careless-eyed Camilla,

Though her wounded wrist did shine
Likest "ivory, stained with wine;"
Let them go, my noble Masters,
With a sigh for Love's disasters,
And the challenge—none so fine!
None a hand—like Katharine.

Dante! spirit sad and lone!
Laughing love thou hast not known;
Weeping love attends on thee,
With its mortal mystery;
And thine Angel, Beatrice,
Aweth with her hand of ice.
Thou Petrarca! dost thou frown?
Lay thy latest sonnet down!
Set thy shining lance in rest!
For I tilt upon thy breast:
Say'st thou, "like a curving shell,
Where the tender pink does dwell,"
Gleamed thy Laura's milky hand,
Lo! I read it! and I stand
Firm of foot to make it seem,

Even so my Love's doth gleam,
And this gentle hand of mine
Gave a heart—thus did not thine.

Ah! Dan Chaucer!—art thou he,
Morning star of minstrelsy?
Eldest of the English quire,
Highest hill—touched first with fire.
Pass! no bow of mine is bent
At the heart where I have leant,
And thy dream of Marguerite
Was a vision of my Sweet.

Next to thee what champions come?
There be valorous poets some—
Other some whose steel I scorn
In unknightly hands yborne;
At the last a Minstrel proud
Rideth high amid the crowd,
Knight of Lady Una he,
And I do him courtesy;
Yet though "whiter than the snow"
Gleamed that noble Dame, I trow,

White as snow, and therewith warm
Is my Lady's loving arm,
And not golden Oriana,
Nor maid Amoret's high manner,
Waved a hand as white and fine
As the hand of Katharine.

Com'st thou Tasso, with thy crew,
Eastern-aired Armida too?
Oh! a lustrous lady she,
"Beautiful, exceedingly;"
But her Asian soul I doubt,
Looking from those large eyes out;
And her white wrist plays a part,
Beating not as beats her heart;
Hence, Enchantress! hence, too, thou
Mistress of the southern brow;
Though thou be'st Boccaccio's best
"Bocca bacciata" hath no zest!
After thee there floats another
Like as sister of one mother,
Ariosto's Angelique,

Hide her hand, and hide her cheek!
Let a nobler Dame have life
Led by nobler knight to strife—
High born, great, and graceful too
All thy loving songs are true;
Swear, Lord Surrey, stoutly swear,
Was never woman half so fair?
And I will swear that Geraldine
Had no such hand as Katharine.

Nay! high poets, let it be
Thine to thee, and mine to me,
For I see th' accepted King
Of all earthly minstrelling,
Crowned with homely Avon lilies
As his regal way and will is.
Mighty Master! let me speak;
Though Queen Cleopatra's cheek
Shamed the rosy lotus-dyes,
And her hand in Anthony's
Whiter than dove's milky wing,
Lay a plaything for a King;

Yet, an' thou shalt pardon yield,
Thus I leave the foughten field,
All as fair and yet more true
Than was known to one but you,
Is that fair frank hand of mine
That gave to me Katharine?

January 1856.

THE HYMN OF THE PRIESTESS OF DIANA.

Oh, of all maidens Mistress! Help at need
Of souls unstained, and bosoms virginal!
With vervain and with fragrant gums we feed
The flame that burned, and burns, and ever shall;
Feed thou the fire that flames with holy thought,
And let the world to thy white shrine be brought.

The altar-light, mounting to find thy face,
Gleams back upon us from the brow divine,
Filling with placid splendour all the place:
Fill so the earth, supremest Goddess mine!
That men, awaking out of fancied light,
May know it, matched with Dian's noon-time—night.

O brow, where shame can never come to sit!
O cheek of snow, which blush can never melt!
O ear, that hears no word or wish unfit!
O breast, which thought unsainted never felt!
Show thyself, Dian! unto other eyes
As unto ours, thy deep-sworn votaries.

For we, who round about thine altar go,
Thou Daughter of the Father of the world!
Know thee divinest;—if men knew thee so
Then were the false gods from their temples hurled;
And mortals, leaving blind and sinful yearning,
Should scorn false beauty, beauty true discerning.

Queen of the quiet sky!—the night's full Moon!
Be moon! and pierce the darkness of this cloud,
Whereunder wander, in a dreamful swoon,
The fellows of our blood, a witless crowd;
Send thou the silver ray that lightens this;
Show them the path which goes by good to bliss.

Huntress of noble harts—high-purposed Maid!
Whose sandal tied for free and fearless chase
Is fairer than the cestus proud, displayed
By her of Cyprus—stand in pride of place
Before the eyes of men, and lead them on
To hunt beside thee, turning off for none.

Ah, bliss! beside thee—by thee—in thy spirit—
The chase of life along the years to lead,
Conquering desire by high desire to merit
The joy of joys, the love of loves, the meed
Of untold peace, waiting th' unshaken faith
Firm held through life, in full repose on death.

For Thou, of all the gods, hast these to give—
The kingdom of a calm and equal mind;
The kiss—cold, true,—bidding the soul's life live
To meet caresses, tarrying yet behind,
But past hope tender, like the dreams the moon
Left on the forehead of Endymion.

Eheu! we speak of things we cannot know,
And knowing, in this presence we were dumb;
But on the winds which round thy portal go
Echoes from Aphrodite's revels come,
Marring our hymns. High Goddess! make men see
The "Foam-Born's" beauty but a blot to thee.

TO A SLEEPING LADY.

DARLING! as you lie there sleeping, with the holy angels keeping
Watch and ward around your pillow, shading it with wings of gold;
Sentinels whose happy duty is to guard your grace and beauty;
While you lie there dreaming, seeming all your sweet self, chaste and cold;
Who would think that the true treasure of that casket, beyond measure
Rich, and fair, and finished, is not where the lovely casket lies?
That they see the palace-portal set ajar, and the Immortal
Gone forth from its rosy gateway, locking satin lids on eyes?

Yet so is it! Fairest woman! and what's there is but the human
Robe and raiment which your spirit wears, to walk with all the rest,
Regal raiment! ah, the silky wavelets of that hair! the milky
Whiteness of the brow! the neck! the soft hands folded o'er the breast!
As a Queen's grace seems to linger in the pearl-strings which her finger
Loosens—so thy soul leaves glory on that sleeping form of thine;
But the beautiful, still body is not that which most I worship,
And your soul; my Pride! my Bride!—is here, and talking low with mine.

All because, at such an hour, Love hath so much charm and power,
Life hath so much deeper knowledge of its march and mystery,

That—so soon as I invite it—coy no longer, but delighted
Forth thy sweet and stately spirit comes for fellowship with me!
And, beside my spirit sitting, thoughts with deep thoughts interknitting,
Speaking plainly in a silence, clearer, dearer far than speech,
Mine grows all thine inmost being; and I see thee—more than seeing—
I and thou as one together: blended, ended, each in each.

STELLA.

SWEET Soul! suddenly met, utterly loved,
At the first eye-glance of our sudden meeting!
I look back on the ways whereby I moved
To this fair fate, my lonely life completing:
I did not seek, you, Dear! no vision tender
Bade me expect you on my rayless road!
There was no dreamy dawning of the splendour
Your white light sheds! no morning grey that shewed
Where my Star waited under life's horizon!—
Ah, fair, pure, silvery Star! set not again!
Better no lamp to fix the sailors' eyes on
Than one brief beam cast on the cold dark main!

INSCRIBED ON A SKULL PICKED UP ON THE ACROPOLIS AT ATHENS.

I AM the skull of Nedjm, a Turk,
Who fought at Athens with the Giaour;
When cannon-balls were hard at work
Shattering the Parthenon—that hour
A classic fragment took me fair
Under the waist-cloth, and so made
"Ruins" of me. For long years there
My remnants with the rest have laid.
Scant burial got we from the Greek—
The green fly and the hooded crow
Helped the hot sun to leave me sleek,
Till, as thou seest, my pate did grow
White as new Parian. At the last
A Briton spied me, as he passed

Roaming the strewed Acropolis,
And lightly fashioned me to this.
Drink! if thou wilt; and, drinking, say
Never did ancient craftsman make
Cyathus, Krater, Patera
Fitter a mighty thirst to slake.
But! call not me a thing of the clod!
The Parthenon owned no such plan!
Man made that temple for a God,
God made these temples for a man!

DEDICATION OF A POEM FROM THE SANSKRIT.

KATE ! on the daisies of your English grave
I lay this little wreath of Indian flowers,
Fragrant for me because the scent they have
Breathes of the memory of our wedded hours ;

For others scentless ; and for you, in heaven,
Too pale and faded, dear dead wife ! to wear,
Save that they say—what makes all fault forgiven—
That he who brings them lays his heart, too, there.

April 9, 1865.

THE NEW LUCIAN.

[To H. D. TRAILL, Esq., on the Dedication of his book, "The New Lucian."]

—→•←—

"AT that eternal parting of the ways,"
Thou say'st, good Friend! looking to see it come
When hands which cling, unclasp; arms disembrace;
And lips, that murmured love to lips, are dumb.
Aye! it will come—the bitter hour!—but bringing
A better love beyond, more subtle-sweet;
A higher road to tread; with happier singing,
And no cross-ways to part familiar feet!
Smil'st thou, my later Lucian! knowing too well
Hope's under-ache, Faith's fallacies all sped?
Yet THAT which gave thee thy fair gift, to tell
How in Elysium chat th' unsilenced Dead,
Shall some day whisper: "Lo! the Life Immortal!
Enter! for *thee* stands wide the golden portal!"

ON THE DEATH OF THE PRINCESS ALICE.

[It will be remembered that Her Royal Highness died of diphtheria, contracted from the caresses of her little son, whom she was nursing.]

TENDER and true! whose virtue was thy crown!
Whose royalty was royally to live!
Death, sent to fetch thee, laid his arrow down,
And prayed that Love the bitter call would give;
But Love, who could not stop such gentle breath,
Whispered thy child to give the Kiss of Death!

FACIES NON OMNIBUS UNA.

Not a life below the sun
But is precious—unto one!
Not an eye, however dull,
But seems—somewhere—beautiful;
Not a heart, howe'er despised,
But is passioned for and prized.
Fool! who laughs at lack of graces,
Each man hath a many faces!

ARMAGEDDON.

A WAR SONG OF THE FUTURE.

MARCHING down to Armageddon—
Brothers, stout and strong!
Let us cheer the way we tread on
With a soldier's song!
Faint we by the weary road,
Or fall we in the rout,
Dirge or Pœan, Death or Triumph!—
Let the song ring out!

We are they who scorn the scorners—
Love the lovers—hate
None within the world's four corners—
All must share one fate;

We are they whose common banner
Bears no badge nor sign,
Save the Light which dyes it white—
The Hope that makes it shine.

We are they whose bugle rings,
That all the wars may cease;
We are they will pay the Kings
Their cruel price for Peace;
We are they whose steadfast watchword
Is what Christ did teach,—
"Each man for his Brother first—
And Heaven, then, for each."

We are they who will not falter—
Many swords or few—
Till we make this Earth the altar
Of a worship new;
We are they who will not take
From palace, priest, or code,
A meaner Law than "Brotherhood"—
A lower Lord than GOD.

Marching down to Armageddon—
Brothers, stout and strong!
Ask not why the way we tread on
Is so rough and long!
God will tell us when our spirits
Grow to grasp His plan!
Let us do our part to-day—
And help Him, helping Man!

Shall we even curse the madness,
Which for "ends of State,"
Dooms us to the long, long sadness,
Of this human hate?
Let us slay in perfect pity,
Those that must not live;
Vanquish, and forgive our foes—
Or fall,—and still forgive!

We are those whose unpaid legions,
In free ranks arrayed,
Massacred in many regions—
Never once were stayed:

We are they whose torn battalions—
Trained to bleed, not fly!
Make our agonies a triumph—
Conquer, while we die!

Therefore, down to Armageddon—
Brothers, bold and strong;
Cheer the glorious way we tread on
With this soldier's song!
Let the armies of the old Flags
March in silent dread!
Death and Life are one to us,
Who fight for Quick and Dead!

THE FOUR CROWNS.

[Written upon the death of the Prince Consort.]

THRONED before the people
Queen of land and sea,
While from tower and steeple
Crashed the clangorous glee;
First of four—enamelled
All with kingdoms round,
The crown of this, our England,
Upon thy brow was bound.

Next, in happiest hours,
Came the crown of life;
Love's fair wreath of flowers
Diademed thee Wife:

Hailed, Princess and Woman,
Honoured, Queen and Spouse,
Half the golden burden
Lightened on thy brows.

Yet a crown came after,
Waiting thee to wear;
Little children's laughter
Rippled in thine ear.
At thy knee, most Noble!
Learning how to reign,
Princes and princesses
Grew—a gracious train.

Then, that coronation,
Grander than of Queen,
Making highest station
Higher than had been,
Did betide thee! binding
On thy drooping brow
Sorrow's thorny circlet—
Death hath crowned thee now.

Oh, our Queen! our Mother!
Thou, of all, know'st all;
Joy or sorrow—other
Cannot hence befall.
Sad, imperial Forehead!
Sceptred, weary Hand;
Widowed Heart! the Greatest
And Loneliest in the Land!

HAVELOCK IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

THE foot set firm,—the hand upon the hilt,—
The warrior-gaze,—as innocent of fear
As any maid's of shame,—which, past the guilt
And blood and battle, sees the triumph clear;

Stand so in bronze!—large to thy levelled eye,
In the supreme imperial peril dawning,
"*Hoc signo vinces*" shines upon the sky;
And calm as one who knows his Master's warning;

Stand thou in bronze!—stand! what thou wert, a rock
Whereon Rebellion's yeasty billows breaking,
Drove wave on wave,—dashed high—and from the shock
Fell back in shattered foam;—thyself unshaking:

So stand!—the busy feet of men go by thee,
Each one to-day the safer for that sword;
Meeanee's just and valiant chief is nigh thee,
Palmerston; Beaconsfield; the great Sea-lord;

Well met in some far-off serenest session,
The unimpassioned rest of great men gone;
And here together set—love's poor profession!—
In storied effigy, and sculptured stone.

Ah! speaking stone, and bronze, cunningly graven
To show these Champions of the English name,
Are men's hearts such, that knave, and fool, and craven,
Can pass ye daily, and be still the same?

But, true and faithful servant! somewhere plaining
That labour multiplies and wage is none,
Read Havelock's history, and thereby gaining
The comfort of his courage, copy one

Who all life's chilly spring and summer dreary
Wrought in pure patience what he found to do,
Possessing his own soul—not once a-weary—
Content, because God was contented too.

Wherefrom he hived the honey which is sweetest,
The flower of all the flowers of all a life,
A wisdom so perfected, so completest,
Great soldiers gave him place to stem the strife:

Which never given, Havelock's highest glory
Had lacked our knowledge, not his Master's praise,
One splendid page been lost from England's story,
But not one leaf from his immortal bays.

Go to! and work—God's servant—serving men;
Bethinking how the ranks closed up, and cried,
"*Way for the General!*" and his answer then,—
"*You have made way, my lads!*"—fair time for pride!

June 1862.

OXFORD REVISITED.

MOTHER! mild Mother! after many years—
So many that the head I bow turns grey—
Come I once more to thee, thinking to say
In what far lands, through what hard hopes and fears,
'Mid how much toil and triumph, joys and tears
I taught thy teaching; and, withal, to lay
At thy kind feet such of my wreaths as may
Seem least unworthy. But what grown child dares
Offer thee honours, Fair and Queenly One!
Tower-crowned, and girdled with thy silver streams,
Mother of ah! so many a better son?
Let me but list thy solemn voice, which seems
Like Christ's, raising my dead: and let me be
Back for one hour—a Boy—beside thy knee.

May 1883.

A DUET.

HE:

"AH!—if you knew! if I dared to discover
Half that my heart feels to-day:
If there were words for so faithful a lover,
Soft enough, fond enough,—say!
Would you be vexed at my passionate pleading!
Would you believe it was true?
How would the beautiful eyes look,—conceding?
Rebuking? Ah, Sweet! if you knew!"

SHE:

"How can I know, when a glance of relenting
Stays the rash whisper, half-said?
How can I know when,—while I am consenting,
'No'—is the sentence you dread?

Sometimes—I think I should never believe you,
Sometimes—my thought—is not so;
If you say nothing, no answer can grieve you,
Only then—what can I know?"

THE ALTAR OF PITY.

[From the "Thebais" of Statius.]

In the mid-city—to no mighty God
Dedicate—rose an altar. Pity built
Her gentle seat there, and the miserable
Made all its consecration: never lacked
That Altar suppliants! none are turned away!
Whoso doth ask is heard; for day and night
The shrine stands open, and the offering
Of woful wail is free. A frugal faith!
No spice-fed flames burn there! no costly blood
Is shed: with tears—salt tears—the marble reeks.
No image soars above, no bronze hath ta'en
Stamp of the Deity! She loves to dwell

Deep in the thoughts,—hid in the aching heart,
And ever hath she trembling worshippers:
And ever is the spot thick with a throng
Sad-faced; the happy only know it not!

THE CHOLERA IN ITALY.

[Suggested by a sketch of John Millais, Esq., R.A., representing a skeleton shooting an arrow by night into the habitations of a fortified town.]

How did it come to his mind? the fleshless and horrible dream—
Gruesome, cruel, and weird—making the murk more grim;
Standing stark-naked in bone, which the star-light sets all a-gleam—
Shooting his shot at the town, the little town silent and dim?

Said we not, each to the other, "Death is an Angel of Light!"
While our tears as they rolled gave the lie to our lips?

Here's one paints us the thing awful, authentic, aright—
Tells the Truth straight out, from the skull to the spiked toe-tips!

So, if you opened this page an idle moment to soothe,
Madam! or Sir!—as may be—best close the volume for good;
Here's no matter to flatter flesh and blood in their youth!
Here's an Artist in earnest—Death's picture on worm-eaten wood!

But if you ask what he meant, yonder the Tuscan town lies
Under the curtains of midnight, spangled with planet and star,
All looking down so calm! so splendid! as if the eyes
Of numberless Angels were watching our one little world from afar.

And I hear on the rampart-stones the heel of the sentinel ring;
And I see him halt and count the chimes of the midnight bell,

And he listens towards us here;—"But 'tis only the cicalas sing!"
And he shoulders his musket again, and passes the word, "All's well!"

And away, within those walls, I know there is pleasure and pain;
(Ah me! the sorrows and joys wherewith one town may be fraught!)
There's scented smoke from the censers, where the people pray in vain,
And a flare from the pharos-lantern to bring the feluccas to port.

And I seem to see in the gleam which hangs all over the town,
Cresset lights of a banquet, and merry torchbearers who go—
Their jolly feet false with the wine—in laughter up and down,
With rose-crowns awry on their heads—and cornets that cheerily blow.

Ah, and I know that, beneath the beautiful roof of the night,
Bridal couches are spread, and lovers at last are one,
Who say, "If God would will that it never more should be light,
Then stay on the other side, and wait till we wish for thee, Sun!"

Laughter, and music, and banquets, and roses, and revelry,
And prayers in the churches to please the Keeper of heaven and hell,
And the ships with spices and bales ploughing bravely in from the sea,
And still that sentinel looks from the wall and cries, "All's well!"

Doth he not see, close by, this spectre we see so plain,
Who blisters the growing grass with the bones of his clattering feet?
And makes the still air reek with the fester of live things slain,

And turns to corpse-light, on his skull, the star-light holy and sweet?

Cannot he hear the Voice—still—small—that comes with this thing?
Drives it, striding along; halts it, elbows and knees,
Says to the skeleton bowman, "Now fit thy shaft to the string,
Shoot me a shot at the town; for the hour is come to these!"

Cursed Bowman! who shoot'st with an arrow dipped in the pest!
Maker of all! Whose will is good, though Thou willest we die!
It is changed in that little town from joy at its gayest and best,
To cramps that curdle the blood, and tortures that glaze the eye.

The sentinel, careless of all, stalks quiet upon the wall;
But the pilot has yielded the helm of his vessel with a scream:

At the banquet the guests drop dead—the worshippers,
priests, and all,
Fly! ere they chant "Amen;"—and that sweet bridal
dream,
Which the lovers dreamed together—but half asleep—
while their lips
Still kissed, for fear lest a minute from love's brief
rapture be took—
Is ended in this, that one from the arms of the other
slips,
And that other—chilled by the corpse—turns corpse
herself, at a look.

Ah, Thou Lord, Thou God! Who sendest this pestilent
wraith!
Giver of life, Who hast given the instinct to love to
live,
Teach us another lesson—to render it back in faith,
When the messenger comes like this, with a ghastly
message to give:

Ah, Thou Lord, Thou God! our souls are the little
town:

At the twanging of that black bow, ill fare they who there do dwell;

But help our souls to hear, through the darkness that settles down,

Thy sentinel on the wall, crying always to all, "All's well!"

REST.

His Mother was a Prince's child,
His Sire a crownëd King;
There lacked not to his splendid lot
What power or wealth could bring;
Great nobles served him, bending low,
Strong captains wrought his will;
Fair fortune!—but it wearied him,
His spirit thirsted still!

For him the glorious music rang
Of singers, silent long;
Grave histories told, in scrolls of old,
The strife of right and wrong;

For him Philosophy unveil'd
Athenian Plato's lore,
Might these not serve to fill a heart?
Not these! he sigh'd for more!

He loved!—the truest, newest lip
That ever lover pressed,
The queenliest mouth of all the south
Long love for him confessed:
Round him his children's joyousness
Rang silverly and shrill;
Thrice happy! save that happiness
Missed something—something still!

To battle all his spears he sent,
In streams of winding steel;
On breast and head of foeman dead
His warhorse set its heel;
The jewell'd housings of its flank
Swung wet with blood of kings;
Yet the rich victory seemed rank
With the blood-guilt it brings!

The splendid passion seized his soul,
To heal, by statutes sage,
The ills that bind our hapless kind,
And chafe to crime and rage;
And dear the people's blessing was,
The praising of the poor;
But evil stronger is than thrones,
And darkness doth endure!

He laid aside the sword and pen,
And lit the lamp, to wrest
From nature's range the secrets strange,
The treasures of her breast;
And wisdom deep his guerdon was,
And wondrous things he knew;
Yet from each vanquish'd mystery
Some harder marvel grew!

No pause! no respite! no sure ground,
To stay the spirit's quest!
In all around not one thing found
So good as to be "best;"

Not even love proved quite divine;
Therefore his search did cease,
Lord of all gifts that life can give
Save the one sweet gift—Peace!

Then came it!—crown, sword, wreath—each lay,
An unregarded thing!
The funeral sheet from head to feet,
Was mantle to that king!
And, strange!—Love, learning, statecraft, sway,
Look'd always on before,
But those pale, happy, lips of clay,
Asked nothing!—nothing more!

THE FIRST DISTRIBUTION OF THE VICTORIA CROSS.

To-DAY the people gather from the streets,
To-day the soldiers muster near and far;
Peace, with a glad look and a grateful, meets
Her rugged brother War.

To-day the Queen of all the English land,
She who sits high o'er Kaisers and o'er Kings,
Gives with her royal hand—th' Imperial hand
Whose grasp the earth en-rings—

Her Cross of Valour to her worthiest;—
No golden toy with milky pearls besprent,
But simple bronze, and for a warrior's breast
A fair, fit ornament.

And richer than red gold that dull bronze seems,
Since it was bought with lavish waste of worth
Whereto the wealth of Earth's gold-sanded streams
Were but a lack, and dearth.

Muscovite metal makes this English Cross,
Won in a rain of blood and wreath of flame;
The guns that thundered for their brave lives' loss
Are worn hence, for their fame!

For, listen! all ye maidens laughing-eyed,
And all ye English mothers, be aware!
Those who shall pass before ye at noon-tide
Your friends and champions are.

The men of all the army and the fleet,
The very bravest of the very brave,
Linesman and Lord—these fought with equal feet
Firm-planted on their grave.

The men who, setting light their blood and breath
So they might win a victor's haught renown,
Held their steel straight against the face of Death,
And frowned his frowning down.

And some that grasped the bomb, all fury-fraught,
And hurled it far, to spend its spite away—
Between the rescue and the risk, no thought—
Shall pass our Queen this day.

And some who climbed the deadly glacis-side,
For all that steel could stay, or savage shell;
And some, whose blood upon the Colours dried
Tells if they bore them well!

Some, too, who, gentle-hearted even in strife,
Seeing their fellow or their friend go down,
Saved his, at peril of their own dear life,
And won the Civic Crown.

Well done for them; and, fair Isle, well for thee!
While that thy bosom beareth sons like those
"*The little gem set in the silver sea*"
Shall never fear her foes.

1856.

THE WRECK OF THE "NORTHERN BELLE."

FAIR sight! for a crew
Of Englishmen true,
When homeward their course they hold,
With sails bleached white
By the tropic light,
And sheathing a-glitter like gold;
Fair sight! from the rails,
—When the Topman hails
"Land ho! on the larboard!"—to see
The green waves leap
At the white cliff's steep
On the shore of the land of the free:—

Fair music they make together,
The cliff and the climbing foam;
And it sounds in the bright blue weather
Like the wanderer's welcome home.

But when the east wind howleth,
And the great seas rise and rave,
Another sight
Is that belt of white,
And another sound's on the wave;
Small welcome for wildered vessel,
When the billows, giant and grey,
Break—sworn on the sand
Her keel to strand,
And her ribs on the rocks to lay!
Oh! the silver gates of your island
Were liker the gates of hell,
In the mist of that winter morning
To the crew of the "Northern Belle."

We left New York for London,
(And the wind left with us too!)

We thrashed our way
Through Atlantic spray,
And ran the Channel through;
'Twas three on the morning of Monday
When we let the anchors go
Ten cables, or more,
From Kingsgate shore,
To ride out the storm and snow;
Ten cables from where green meadows,
And quiet homes could be seen,
No greater space
From peril to peace—
But the savage sea between!

Yet a greater space
To us had been grace,
For still as we neared the shore,
The wild white roll of the waves on the shoal
Roared round us more and more;
Roared out, in a ring around us,
You might see them fore and aft,

On ragged ledge,
And splintered edge,
All mad to dash our craft;
While the weltering rocks,
With their sea-weed locks
Awash in the whirling froth,
Stood up like slaves
Of the winds and waves,
Waiting to wreak their wrath.

Not yet, brave ship!
For the anchor's grip
Is fast in the ooze and shell;
The gusts may shake,
And the great surge break,
But the iron holds her well.
If a smith could tell,
As his sledge-hammer fell,
That each little link should hold
The craft and the crew,
And their lives' hope too,
His strokes would be strong and bold!

Ease, ease, mad strain!
Hold, hold, good chain!
We freshened the hawse once more;
'Twas ten of the day,
And the vessel lay
Stern on to the snow-dimmed shore.

And now from the town
They hurry down,
For the cry is "A Wreck!" "A Wreck!"
(Ah! under their tread
Is the firm green mead,
'Neath ours but the slippery deck).
Kind souls! they shout!
Look! yonder comes out
A lugger from off the land,
Brave crew and craft!—
Ready fore and aft!—
She will lend us a helping hand:
'Bout ship! so, so!
She stays,—yes! no!
Port, port! ah Heaven! that sea—

Gone—vessel and men
While the heart beats ten!
Gone,—drowned, for their charity!

Rose from each lip
On shore, and ship,
A cry, a groan, a prayer;
While the nine hearts brave
Went under the wave,
And their death-cry hung in air;
No seaman but felt
His man's heart melt;—
But the masts were down ere now,
And the raffle and wreck,
Scarce clear of the deck,
Hung, fouling the larboard bow;
So we shouted at last,
"Clear away that mast
Or else we are ill bested!
God take those home!
When our turn's come
The dead can bury the dead."

Thus, all that day,
In snow and spray,
For dear life still we toiled;
And faint and few
The bold words grew
As nearer the breakers boiled;
And still, like a steed
Reined back at speed,
The ship did plunge and rear;
While the burly main
Strove on in vain
To crack our cable and gear:
Till the twilight gloom,
Like the earth on the tomb,
Came over, and hid the town;
And the last we could see,
They were busy a-lee
Dragging the life-boats down.

Ah me! no boat
In that surf could float,
No oarsmen cleave a way;

No eye so bright
As to pierce the night
That on land and water lay:
Oh! leaden dark!
That left no spark
Of star, in the wild wet sky,
Not one pale ray
To glimmer and say
That God and help were nigh.
The timbers racked,
The cables cracked,
Wilder the waters dashed;
Ease her! no need—
The ship is freed!
She drove,—she rose,—she crashed!

Then settled and fell
The "Northern Belle,"
As one who no more strives;
But the foremast stood,
Good Canada wood,
With nine and twenty lives:

If dreadful the day
As none can say,
Oh! the night was terribler far,
As each man clung
To the shrouds, or hung
Ice-cold, on the icy spar;
And hearts beat slow,
As the night did go,
Like a lazily-ticking clock;
Till we longed to drop
From the dripping top
Nor wait for the last sure shock.

Then, while she did grind,
We called to mind
Each one, his own home-place,
New Jersey towns,
And Connecticut downs,
And the pleasant meadows of maize:
We thought of brothers,
And wives and mothers,
With whom we should never be;

Of our babies playing,
Or perhaps a prayer saying
For "daddy," far off at sea;
And *we* said prayers
To mingle with theirs,
And held for the daylight still,
Which came anon
When hope was gone
As God's best mercies will.

For, soon as the clouds,
Like great grey shrouds,
Let out the Lazarus-light,
We looked to land
And saw on the sand,
Good God! a cheery sight;—
Seven noble men
(Christ save them, then!)
That would not see us drown,
With oars in hand,
And the life-boat manned,
(The life-boat dragged from the town;)

And they gave us a cheer
We could plainly hear,
Which we answered with aching throat:
Ah then! dear life!
To watch the strife
Between the storm and the boat.

More strong and steep
The waves did leap
For every stroke she made;
As they were bound
To see us drowned,
And would not be gainsayed:
"Now, now! ah now!
Pull bow! pull bow!
Oh! yonder swells a sea,
She swamps!—no! no!
Thank God, not so!
She rounds beneath our lee,"
—Thrice with a freight
Of lives they fight
Their way—stern down and stem—

Then—safe and sound,
On the English ground!
Thanks to the Lord, and them.

. . . . . .

Look ye, mates mine!
There be stories fine
Of Greek and Roman deed;
But when all's done
There was never one
Of better help at need.
Which man of our crew,
My messmates true,
But holds his life a gift
From those brave Seven,
Henceforward, please Heaven,
To be used with thoughtful thrift!
To be held on earth
For service of worth,
Save when Englishmen cry—and then
Come storm, come slaughter,
To be spent like water
For the sake of the Kingsgate men.

There are those at home,
When the news is come,
Will crowd to hear of the ship,
With great tears rounding,
And glad hearts bounding,
And blessings a-pant on the lip.
There are girls there, plenty,
Not come to twenty,
Too shy and demure to speak,
Real ladies,—would kiss
For love of this,
Each man of that crew on his cheek:
Ay! count it grand
To touch but a hand
Of the Seven, who staked their lives,
Lost seamen to save
From a cold sea-grave,
And send them to sisters and wives.

I'll say one thing
Before I bring
This plain sea-song to its end,

Such hearts of gold,
More than state-craft old,
Will help all quarrels to mend.
America sent,
With warm intent,
Your ship for a new-year's token,
You give her back
Our lives from wrack,
Shall such friends ever be broken?
No! no! they shall stand
Hand fast in hand,
All sisterly—side by side—
And none ever tell
Of the "Northern Belle,"
Save with flushes and smiles of pride.

Yet more's to do,—
That first boat's crew
In this verse shall be given,
That Yankee boys
With a ready voice
May say the list of the Seven.

The men I write
In the "Mary White,"
GEORGE CASTLE'S boat, did go—
JOHN, CASTLE'S brother,
GEORGE FOX, another,
NED EMPTAGE and JEM ROWE—
Those gallant five
Did save alive
Our crew from the "Northern Belle,"
With ROBERT MILLER
And WILLIAM HILLER

. . . . . .

I have no more to tell.

HASTINGS, *Jan.* 23, 1857.

A HOME SONG.

THE swallow is come from his African home
To build on the English eaves;
The Sycamore wears all his glistering spears,
And the Almond rains roseate leaves;
And—dear Love!—with thee, as with bird and with tree,
'Tis the time of blossom and nest,
Then, what good thing of the bountiful Spring
Shall I liken to thee—the best?

Over the streamlet the rose-bushes bend
Clouded with tender green,
And green the buds grow upon every bough,
Though as yet no rose-tint is seen;

Like those, thou art come to thy promise of bloom,
Like theirs, thine shunneth the light;
Break, rose-bud!—and let a longing heart know
If the blossom be red or white!

Up the broad river with swelling sails,
A glorious vessel goes,
And not more clear in the soft blue air
Than in the still water she shows!
Dost thou not go with as brave a show,
And, sooth, with as swelling a state?
Oh, come into harbour with that thou bear'st,
Dear ship!—for I eagerly wait.

Fair ship!—ah, Kate! none beareth a freight
As precious and rich as thine,
And where's the rose-bush that will burgeon and blush
With a blossom like thine and mine?
—Well! well!—we do, as the meadow birds too,
Since meadows with gold were dyed,
The hen sits at rest in the hidden nest,
And her mate sings glad at her side.

SWANSCOMBE, *April* 1857.

FOND FANCIES.

FOND fancies, past the telling,
Come o'er me—idly spelling
The mystic meanings dwelling
In what these Hindoos taught:
So fast they rise—and faster,
That I bid them over-master
Slow study;—and far past her
Carry my willing thought!

Carry my thoughts, confessing
Each dear and separate blessing,
(Ah! how beyond expressing,
Except with eyes, sweet wife!)

Each help, from Love's hid heaven,
That thy gentle soul has given
To a soul else overdriven
In the eager race of life.

Sweetheart! how dull beside them
Seems all that would outpride them!
How weak; what may betide them
To bring to fall or fear
This joy to live together
In changeless summer weather!
No clouds to gloom or gather!
No seasons in our year!

Past all weak words the pleasure,
The luxury, the treasure,
Of knowing without measure
This fondness fully-grown;
So that love, no more careful,
Nor fanciful, nor fearful,
Takes—heart, and eye, and ear-full—
The love that is its own!

Let go old legends! sweeter
Than fruit of lotus-eater,
Diviner and completer,
Than Circe's anodyne;
To lessen sadness sent us,
And to double gladness lent us,
The true, unpressed, nepenthos
Is true love's honey-wine!

Let go the pride of learning,
The foolishness of spurning
Life's life, for large discerning
Of vain philosophies!
"The highest truth lies nearest!"
'Twas a Greek said it, Dearest!
Of sages the sincerest,
Grey old Pheidippides!

And let go that mad battle
Which tempts us, with its rattle
To join—like June-mad cattle,
In sinful strife for place!

The sin is not worth sinning;
The end mocks the beginning;
The only prize worth winning
Is ours, without the race!

Therefore, when fears do fret me,
Whenever wild winds threat me,
I fold my sails and get me
To the harbour of thy breast;
Safe there from outer riot,
Like a bird whom fierce hawks fly at,
Escaped, and brooding quiet
Down in his happy nest!

June 1860.

TO H.R.H. THE PRINCESS OF WALES

ON HER FIRST ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND.

FIERCE, brown-bearded, enclad in the spoils of wolf and of wild-cat,
Keener in ravin than wolves, than wild-cats wilder in onset,
Came, in the days gone by, the Danes to the shores of the Angles,
Came on an errand of blood—to beleaguer, to burn, and to ravage.
Ploughing up furrows of foam on the grass-green meads of the North Sea

Steered the old Vikings their course, one hand on the helm of their galley,
One on the helve of their axe: and when from Flamborough's foreland,
Shading his eyes from the glimmer of sunrise, the watcher beheld them
Holding right on for the coast, with the signs and the standards of battle,
Loud thro' the wolds ran the cry, "The Dane! the Dane cometh hither!"
Flickered with warning flames the crests of the hills, and the cressets,
Mothers and maidens fled inland—fast gathered the bowmen and billmen.
Grim the welcome awaiting those strangers!—such greeting as arrows
Carry on wings of wrath, such kisses as edge of sword renders;—
All their room in the land as much as the length of their lances,
Nay, or beneath its turf, the length of the Chieftains who bore them.

Fair, golden-haired, and glad with the joy of her youth and her beauty,
Daughter herself of a Prince, of a Prince the loved and the chosen,
Comes in these happier days the Dane to the shores of the Angles,
Comes on an errand of love, to the music of soft hymenæals.
Over the silver-green seas, which kiss the keel of her vessel,
Bending their foreheads on this side and that to the Maiden of Norseland
(Rightfully Queen of the waves by her Father's right and her Husband's),
Speeds the sweet Princess to land; and all the voices of gladness
Tell that she is arrived whose hand the Prince of the English
Takes in the sight of God and man for the hand of his consort—

Consort in splendours and cares, in the gloom and the glitter of ruling.
Warm the welcome awaiting this lovely and winning invader!
Such as men give with the lips when the heart has gone forward before them;
Such as a nation of freemen, not apt to flatter for fashion,
Make, when the innocent past is a pledge of the happy to-morrows.

Princess! weak is one voice in the throng and clamour of voices,
Poor one flower in the rain of the roses that shower at thy footsteps,
Faint one prayer in the anthem of litanies uttered to bless thee;
Yet to thy young fair face I make an Englishman's greeting,
On thy path to the altar I lay this wreath from a singer,
Unto the God of the altar we pray for blessings together,

We—of the men whose fathers encountered thy fathers
with battle,
These—of the women whose mothers turned pale at the
galleys of Denmark,
Heralds of happiness now, sea-birds that bring from
the Norland
Unto our Prince his Bride—and to England omens of
gladness.

TO F. C. H.

In the shade of the Castle elm-trees,
Under the College limes,
Wherever we sate in deep debate
We said it a hundred times;

With hearts that beat together
At the glad defiance hurled
Against that Fear, whose shadow drear
Chills an awakening world;

With a smile at the Saintly heaven,
And a sigh for the Priestly hell,
Together we stood to make it good,
However our fate befell,

That God is One for all living,
One God of His living and dead;
That Faith and Love have a crown above
Whatever their creed, we said;

Whatever their creed or country,
Whatever their language or line,
Though a thousand Articles thundered
Against their Right divine.

The Challenge is come to a battle,
The flag of the Truth streams out;
Her soldiers,—a maniple,—muster,
Her enemies gather—a rout;

And Thou, who had'st loved to hurtle
A Lancelot of the fray,
To the side of the fewer and truer,
Ah me! art dead ere the day.

Dear voice! so clear and gentle,
Art still, for evermore?—
Kind hand, so fast and faithful,
Art cold—as never before?—

Still! cold!—by the Jumna river
Lie the bones of a murdered man;
We know not the slain from the slayers,
Our brother from Ali Khan.

—In the days of the bloody rebellion
Shot down, and left in his blood—
How should we?—the jackals took something,
And something the wolves of the wood.

And the impulse of human affections
That hunger to have what they love,
Moans over those blank recollections,
While thou dost pity—above:

Dost pity us—splendidly seated
With the workmen of God who die;
Thy task done—ah! so early!
Thy wages won—oh, so high!

Thou seest the "whence" and the "whither,"
Most noble and happy Friend!
Thou watchest the strife of our lower life;
Oh, awful!—thou knowest its end.

I wait—I whisper no question
Whose answer is Death's to speak;
I know it is wise to be foolish,
I know it is strong to be weak:

And wise, to their own discomfort,
And bold for their fellows' sake
Meseems these Seven speak out under heaven;*
And theirs is the side I take,

The side we took when we sojourned
Under the Indian palms,
Watching, with Brahmans and Shastris,
These thought-storms breaking our calms.

Let break!—through Life's rough water,
Dear Friend!—more dear, being dead,
As we sailed, consorts, together,
So sail I alone to thee, Fred!

And under the Castle elm-trees,
In the shade of the College limes,

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* Written at the time of "Essays and Reviews."

None sits in thy seat at deep debate ;
I say by myself, at times,

That God is one God of all living,
Who maketh alive His dead,
That Hope and Love have a crown above,
I say,—as we often said,

Whatever their creed or country,
Whatever their language or line,
Though a thousand Articles thundered
Against their Right divine.

January 1858.

HE AND SHE.

"SHE is dead!" they said to him. "Come away;
Kiss her! and leave her!—thy love is clay!"

They smoothed her tresses of dark-brown hair;
On her forehead of marble they laid it fair:

Over her eyes, which gazed too much,
They drew the lids with a gentle touch;

With a tender touch they closed up well
The sweet thin lips that had secrets to tell;

About her brows, and her dear, pale face
They tied her veil and her marriage-lace;

And drew on her white feet her white silk shoes;—
Which were the whiter no eye could choose!

And over her bosom they crossed her hands,
"Come away," they said,—"God understands!"

And then there was silence;—and nothing there
But the Silence—and scents of the eglantere,

And jasmine, and roses, and rosemary;
For they said, "As a lady should lie, lies she!"

And they held their breath as they left the room,
With a shudder to glance at its stillness and gloom.

But he—who loved her too well to dread
The sweet, the stately, the beautiful Dead,—

He lit his lamp, and took the key,
And turned it!—Alone again—he and she!

He and she; but she would not speak,
Though he kiss'd, in the old place, the quiet cheek;

He and she; yet she would not smile,
Though he called her the name that was fondest erewhile;

He and she; and she did not move
To any one passionate whisper of love!

Then he said, "Cold lips! and breast without breath;
Is there no voice,—no language of death,

"Dumb to the ear, and still to the sense,
But to heart and to soul distinct,—intense?

"See, now,—I listen with soul, not ear—
What was the secret of dying, Dear?

"Was it the infinite wonder of all,
That you ever could let life's flower fall?

"Or was it a greater marvel to feel
The perfect calm o'er the agony steal?

"Was the miracle greater to find how deep,
Beyond all dreams, sank downward that sleep?

"Did life roll backward its record, Dear,
And show, as they say it does, past things clear?

"And was it the innermost heart of the bliss
To find out, so, what a wisdom love is?

"Oh, perfect Dead! oh, Dead most dear,
I hold the breath of my soul to hear;

"I listen—as deep as to horrible hell,
As high as to heaven! and you do not tell!

"There must be pleasures in dying, Sweet,
To make you so placid from head to feet!

"I would tell *you*, Darling, if I were dead,
And 'twere *your* hot tears upon my brow shed.

"I would say, though the Angel of death had laid
His sword on my lips to keep it unsaid.

"*You* should not ask, vainly, with streaming eyes,
Which in Death's touch was the chiefest surprise;

"The very strangest and suddenest thing
Of all the surprises that dying must bring."

. . . . . .

Ah! foolish world! Oh! most kind Dead!
Though he told me, who will believe it was said?

Who will believe that he heard her say,
With the soft rich voice, in the sweet old way:—

"The utmost wonder is this,—I hear,
And see you, and love you, and kiss you, Dear;

" I can speak, now you listen with soul alone;
If your soul could see, it would all be shown

" What a strange delicious amazement is Death,
To be without body and breathe without breath.

" I should laugh for joy if you did not cry;
Oh, listen! Love lasts!—Love never will die.

" I am only your Angel who was your Bride;
And I know that, though dead, I have never died."

ON A DEAD LADY.

Non può far Morte il dolce viso amaro,
Ma 'l dolce viso dolce può far Morte.

Death cannot change her face, tender and fair!
'Tis she who changes Death, and makes him dear.

THE THREE STUDENTS.

[From the German.]

THERE came three students from over the Rhine,
To a certain good hostel they turned them for wine.

"Ho! Landlady, have you strong wine and beer?
How fareth the Fraulein, your daughter dear?"

"My beer is fresh, and my wine is bright;
My child will be shrouded and buried to-night."

They drew the door of her death-room back,
There she slept in her coffin black:—

The first he lifted the veil from the dead,
And bared his curls, and bended, and said,

"Ah! could'st thou but live again, Maiden, here
From this day forth I would love thee dear!"

The second spread softly the face-cloth again,
And his tears fell fast as the midsummer rain:

"Dead! art thou, Lisbeth? cold, lip and brow?
Ah, God! I learn how I loved thee now!"

But the third in his hand did the little hand take,
And kissed the white forehead, and smiled, and spake:

"I love thee to-day as I loved thee before,
I shall love thee as truly for evermore."

SERENADE.

LUTE! breathe thy lowest in my Lady's ear,
Sing while she sleeps, "Ah! belle dame, aimez-vous?"
Till, dreaming still, she dream that I am here,
And wake to find it, as my love is, true;
Then, while she listens in her warm white nest,
Say in slow music,—softer, tenderer yet,
That lute-strings quiver when their tone's at rest,
And my heart trembles when my lips are set.

Stars! if my sweet love still a-dreaming lies,
Shine through the roses for a lover's sake;
And send your silver to her lidded eyes,
Kissing them very gently till she wake;

Then, while she wonders at the lay and light,
Tell her, though morning endeth star and song,
That ye live still, when no star glitters bright,
And my love lasteth, though it finds no tongue.

LYDIA.

[From Horace.]

HE.

As long as I was dear to you, and none—
Not one, save I—
Dared lock his arms about your neck, the Sun
Saw no King happier underneath the sky.

SHE.

As long as you loved Lydia more than all,
And Chloe's face
Had not made Lydia's naught, men might me call
The happiest girl of all the Roman race.

HE.

Well! now, that's past! and Chloe binds my heart
With lute and voice;
Whom so I love that, if Death's fatal dart,
Aimed at her life, struck mine, I should rejoice.

SHE.

Ah! yes—'tis past! I love a Thurian boy,
Who dotes on me;
And for his dear sake I would die with joy,
Nay, or twice over—were the thing to be.

HE.

But—just suppose—the old love could come back
As good as new!
That Chloe with her golden hair should pack,
And my heart open all its gates to you!

SHE.

Supposing that—oh! well!—my Thurian's dear,
And you—alas!
Are wild as Adria, and more light than air,
Yet, Love! with you life and dark Death I'd pass.

DANTE AND HIS VERSES.

[From the French.]

DANTE had writ two lines :—the lines
Talked ;—Quoth the one, " Fame's gateway shines
Open for us."
" Oh ! 'tis but ink
We are !" says t'other.
" Dost thou think
Thoughts perish ? " the first line replied ;
" What's Thought but Nought ? " the second cried.
" Nay ! feel'st thou not th' immortal stir
In every word and character ? "
Asks one.
Sighs t'other, " Not a jot !
I feel dead letters ! "

To the spot
Comes Dante, reads his lines;—thinks deep:—
Then blots one verse, and one will keep.
They knew!—his pen was Destiny!
One was to live, and one to die.

THE LOST PLEIAD:

A STORY OF THE STARS.

—•—

At the noon of a May night,
When the stars are all alight,
And the white moon wanders through the grey;
While softly over all
God's piteous hand doth fall,
To shield tired eyes from the day;—

At such a night's noon,
I watched the stars and moon,
Till they and I alone did seem to be;
Till, in that silver throng
Sorely my soul did long
To rove at will, and many wonders see.

Wherefore I let it large,
And up from Earth's dim marge
It bounded like a horse with broken rein;
From the Dragon's flaming crest
To Orion's star-bound breast,
It roamed upon that planet-studded plain.

On the broad flank of the Bear,
Dubhè flashed fierce and clear,
Lighting his glancing eyes and gleaming tusk;
And the Lion shook his mane,
And the great star-feathered Crane
Was up among his brothers of the dusk.

In the Northern Bull's bright van
I saw dread Aldebaran,
Andromeda's wild hair I saw a-flame;
By the Lyre's glittering strings,
Down through the Swan's white wings,
Unto a lovely, lonely light I came;

A cloud of splendour sent
Out on the firmament
As 'twere the breath of each light-laden star;

A stream of splendour seen
Broad in that sea of sheen,
Like Indian rivers flowing seaward far.

None other orbs did move
In such sweet show of love;
None shone like those 'mid the sky companies;
I knew the Sisters Seven
Were the light-bearers of Heaven,
Whom men do name the tearful Pleiades.

On each sphere's rolling rim
Each held an urn at brim,
And poured its molten silver down her world;
In which fair gift of light
Its live things took delight,
And she in them:—one orb alone was furled

In gloom; nor ray did send,
Save when the Six did bend
Their sister glances on the lonely One;
Whereat I could descry
A sad, mild Majesty,
Sitting unlighted on a lightless sun.

Why she alone of Seven
Nor gave nor took in Heaven
Heaven's gift and gladness—Heaven-filling light—
Wherefore God's awful wrath
Sent her that lampless path,
And dimmed her crown among the Queens of Night

I longed, and sought to hear;—
Oh! gather round and near,—
I know that starless Angel's story through;
It was not all a dream,
It did not wholly seem,—
Listen! I strike low strings! and tell it true.

. . . . . .

"Ah! Sisters Six, lead my dark star and me,
For I am Merope—blind Merope,
And I go shorn of light, who lighted all.
Oh! splendent Sister Stars! gleam on my path,
And show me where it winds among the worlds;
Nor turn your glances hence, because I sit
And moan upon the story of my sin;
For I am Merope—blind Merope,—

Merope—light-abandoned Merope,
Who stood between God's lowest and God's love.

Oh, thrice twain Sisters! lead my world along.
In the beginning when none was save He,
God flung from both great hands His star-seed forth
Over the endless meadows of the void;
Wherein, as in the grain the broad green blade,
Life lay, and life's high loves and happy ends;
And unto each He gave fit ministrant,
And faithful warder. Some were kings of suns,
And dipped their cressets in the molten gold
That rippled round His throne; and other some
Fed on their borrowed glory, and were glad,
Frail spirits, shunning the full glance of God;
Some, with the vaporous wreaths they did bestride,
Faded or were illumed; and some at speed
Rode errant angels, singing thorough space,
Curbing the Comets to their headlong course;
And unto some He gave a gentler gift,
To tend the lower worlds, and shine for them;
And unto us, His youngest-born, the Earth,

An ever-needing, never-ceasing care:
For chief He charged our Seven Sister-lights
To wax and wane above her, keeping aye
Mid station: and at noon and night, and ever,
To listen open-eared, and bear above
Unto His feet its children's cries and tears,—
For all tears that do fall, fall for God's ear.
Ai, ai! it was our charge—a gracious charge,
Ai, ai! I lost love's task unlovingly;
For I am Merope—blind Merope,—
Merope,—light-abandoned Merope,
Who stood between God's lowest and God's love.

Oh, Sisters Six! I follow plainingly,—
For I am Merope; and on my brow
God, at the giving of the silver worlds,
Laying His hand, left splendour. None of all,
Sisters—not one of all your gleaming band,
Wore whiter glory, or stood nearer Him.
First of the seven lights I came and went,
And unto me Electra bent her beams,
And Maia bowed her brightness—and ye three,

Alcyone, Celæno, Taygetë,
And silver Sterope, next me in place,
Took fire from me, and tended me with love.
I was a perfect Angel of pure ray,
Chosen a chief of Planets. Woe is me!
I am a wildered World in well-known paths,
For I am Merope,—rash Merope,—
She that was great in Heaven become the least,
Standing between God's lowest and God's love.

Oh, Sisters! lead me with the sound of song,
Sweep solemn music forth from balanced wings,
And leave it cloudlike in the fluttered sky,
That I may feel and follow. Ah! my light,
My vanished lovely light! I sate in place
With wakeful eyes and kept the earth in ken;
And ye around me waited for my word.
Far down below the cone of shadow crept
Whereunder lay Earth's night, and from its gloom
Prayers, and the sound of tears, and other sounds
Which unto angel ears are strange, came up
Like smoke from peaked volcano, and our vans

Fanned them fresh breath to take them on to God.
Sisters! amid the myriad cries that rose
From lips that Night's nepenthe could not calm,
Came a long prayer for mercy, growing loud
As it waxed hopeless;—she who uttered it,
A sad, stained woman, with a fair fierce cheek,
Kneeling beside the black rim of a river,
The rim of a black river, surging out
From a great city's glare into the gloom.
I saw her—and ye saw her, Sisters mine,
Plucking the mother's bosom from her babe
Ere the waves took them—one starved dead of love,
And one of life—both crying one heart-cry
That asked God's pity in pain's common tongue;
And ye said, "Sister, let it go above;"
But I, who, knowing all things, knew her sin,
And what deed stained the raiment of her soul,
Answered, "It goeth not, her grief is just;"
And struck it down the sky. Woe! woe! her cry
Fell, and then rose, and grew up from a groan
Into a voice,—a voice that struck the Stars
And bounded from their brilliant capes, and rolled

Louder than thundering crash of orb on orb,
Thrilling the Planets, till each Angel knew
The very voice of God, saying, "Thou Star!
Thou, Merope! go earthward." Ah, my light!
Oh, Sisters, lead my world on while I weep,
For I am Merope,—blind Merope,
Merope,—light-abandoned Merope,
Who heard unmoved God's lowest ask His love.

List no more, holy Sisters, list no more!
Bar the white porch of each unshamëd ear
With double-folded wing, for I must speak
Of things that enter not at that high gate,—
The mournful matter of a mortal life,
Whereto I went—hence,—but I know not how!
Fairer are homes of heaven, yet very fair
Thy fields and fountains were, my prison-house!
Caverns and woods, valleys and veiny brooks;
And thou, too, mountain-cradled Indian stream!
By whose green brim my feet new from the clouds
Touched the hard earth, and stood: in whose great towns

My spirit breathed harsh air of earth,—and lived:
Within the temple of that country's God
Amid the Indian maids I moved as one,
And took the manner of their race and tongue,
And wore their vest and veil, and bore the name
An earthly father gave, and called his boy
A gentle human boy, loving and brave,
My brother!—Oh, woe! woe! light me along!
For I am Merope,—shamed Merope,
She that was made God's lowest on the earth,
Standing between God's lowest and His love.

Oh! Stars,—I say not Sisters, saying this:—
War rose in that our home, spears fringed the walls
Where corn bristled before; an old fierce king
Sought us for slaves, and men laid down their lives
That others might live free. My brother fought
A-front in all the battles, for these hands
Buckled the steel which kept his heart from harm,
And fed his quiver. Sinless human love
Touched me; and on the battlements by night,
Gazing unknowingly upon mine own,

I charged Star-Angels to shine fair for him,
And send him favouring beams. At such a time,
The captain of the chariots of the king,
Watching our wall, cast eyes of earnest love
On me, and lit my soul up with a flame
Wherein all maiden meekness, fear and faith,
Courage to strive and purity to pray,
And the last little wrack of glory lost,
Melted as May snow melts under the sun,
And left a bare bad heart. Oh! hear me not,
High Stars! a cursed thing is loveless love,—
Accursed of Heav'n; I knew it, and I fell.
Am I not Merope?—dark Merope,
That Merope whom God's wrath did cast down,
Standing between God's lowest and God's love?

Sisters! lead me along. The Planets pale,
The powers of Heaven are pale to hear in Heaven
The story of my shame. Ai, ai! light on!
I hurry to the ending. Many an eve,—
Oh, silver Worlds, ye saw it!—we did meet,
And drank the burning cup of Passion dry,

Nor slacked the draught, nor stayed, though we might see
The dreggy poison through the purple wine.
Ah, a strong thing is Love! strong as a curse
To drag the soul to woe,—strong as a prayer
To lift it to sweet grace! I swore to him
To yield the city open-gated up
Unto his thirsty swords, for pity went,
And faith, and fair thoughts,—all but headlong love,
At his strong breath. My brother kept the guard
I' the eastern gate: I took him food, and tried
The buckles of his breast plate,—one I loosed,
And drew his battle-knife, and laughingly
Struck on the tempered scales, whereat he smiled,
And bade me strike amain: good sooth! I did,—
Down through the stolen passage past his heart,
So that life left him ere the bright blood came;
Then I flung back the portals, and let in
A sea of stormy plumes,—it swept along
One little breath-time; soon a rock-like band
Met it—and stayed—and turned, and scattered it,
Ten to a hundred, fighting for the right,

And speared the backs of the fliers, for all fled
Save one; and him, under my wringing hands,
The savage lances stabbed through greave and groin:
Then mine eyes swam in blood; some angry gripe
Somewhither haled the reeking corse and me
Past howling citizens. Oh, let me end!
Oh! light sad Merope, and let her end!
Merope,—hope-abandoned Merope,
Who stood between God's lowest and God's love!

Ah, sapphire-vested Sisters! ah, crowned Lights!
Bear with my moan a little; I must tell
How human life did leave me. It was when
The stream whereby we lived did slowly rise
To flood its reeded banks. I, gaining sight,
Waking in fetters by the dark stream-side,
Saw under me the swelling tide, and knew
Cold Death was creeping upward. Oh! I shrieked,
And strained the links that held me to the slime,
And sank soul-stricken on the bloody breast
Of what I loved,—he lay there, and on mine
My child, poor fool! I tore him off, and then,

Mad, bleeding, passion-poisoned, wild with woe,
Kneeling beside the black rim of the river,—
The rim of the black river, surging out
From the great city's glare into the gloom,
I cried aloud to Heaven. *The cry came back,*
As I had spurned it! Yes, I knew it all!
As I had spurned it, sitting on my Star!
Yes, yes! I knew it all, and one wild space
God's anger scathed me; then the kind quick waves
Lapped o'er my lip and washed the foul life out;
And then, I know not what,—and then I sat,
Dark on my darkling star. Maker of all!
I do adore Thee, Mighty, Merciful,
Pitying all things, Thou didst pity me,
Who pitied not; for I am Merope,—
Ai, ai! Light-bearers, I am Merope,
Merope,—Heaven-exiled Merope,
Who stood between God's lowest and God's love.

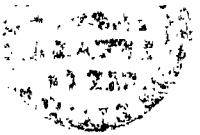
1856.

AMADIS OF GAUL TO DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA.

[From the Spanish.]

THOU, who didst imitate the mournful manner
Of my most lonely and despisëd life,
And—leaving joy for suffering and strife—
Upon the bare hill-side didst pitch thy banner!
Thou, whose unshamëd eyes with tears oft ran o'er—
Salt, dripping tears!—when, giving up all proper
Vessels of use, silver, and tin, and copper,
Thou atest earth's herbs on the earth,—a woeful dinner!
Rest thou content, Sir Knight! Ever and ever—

Or, at the least, while thro' the hemispheres
Golden Apollo drives his glittering mares—
Famous and praised shall be thy high endeavour!
Thy land of birth the glory of all nations!
Thy chronicler's, the crown of reputations!



THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS.

[Suggested by the well-known picture of Mr. Holman Hunt, in which the uplifted form of Christ, resting with extended arms from His labour in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, throws upon the wall of the Virgin's house a figure of a Cross.]

LIGHT and Shadow! Shadow and Light!
Twins that were born at the birth of the sun!
One the secret of all things bright;
The secret of all things sombre, one;
One the joy of the radiant day;
One the spell of the dolorous night:
One at the dew-fall bearing sway;
One at the day-break, rosy and white.

Sister and brother, born of one mother,
Made of a thought of the Infinite One
Made by the wisdom of God—and none other—
In times when the times were not begun.

One with the morning-star for its gem,
Glad Eösphorus, herald of beams;
One that wears for its diadem
Pale, sad Hesperus, planet of dreams.

One for the glory and one for the gloom;
One to show forth and one to shroud;
One for the birth and one for the tomb;
One for the clear sky and one for the cloud.

Sister and brother, for ever and ever,
Nowise disparted, and nowhere a-twain;
Mysteries no man's thinking shall sever;
Marvels none can miss, or explain.

Light, which without a shadow shines not!
Shadow, which shows not unless by light!
(For that which we see to sight combines not,
Except by the sides that escape the sight.)

Is this the parable? this the ending?
That nothing lives for us unless with a foil;
That all things show by contrast and blending—
Pleasure by Pain, and Rest by Toil?

Strength by Weakness, and Gladness by Sorrow;
Hope by Despair, and Peace by Strife;
The Good by the Evil, the Day by the Morrow;
Love by Hatred, and Death by Life?

Ah! then I hate you, Shadow! Shadow!
Ghost and ghoul of the glittering Light!
If the gold of wisdom, the El Dorado
Of Art must be had in this sorrowful sight.

Shadow! we know how lovely and tender
Are the deeds you do with your witchcraft dim;
What wonderful sorcery tempers the splendour
Of light, in your sisterly play with him!

We know what rose-leaf lips would be cold
Without the soft finish of warm half-light;
We know what tresses would lose their gold
If you did not gloss it and gild it aright.

We know how weary the dawns would go
Lacking the promise of placid eves;
We know how fiercely the hours could glow
Without the kind shadows under the leaves;

Yes! and we know how joy would tire,
And gladness turn madness, and life be undone;
And strength prove weakness, and Hope expire,
And Love droop wingless, if change were none.

And, Holiest Shadow of God's great hand!—
That makest the sleep and the spangled night—
I know that by Thee we understand
The stars which in silver His glories write.

And we seem to know that, to eyes like ours,
Dawn by Dusk must usher its state;
That hearts win hope from the darkest hours,
And Love kisses best with a shudder at Hate.

But, Shadow! Shadow! Ghost of the Light!
Be Sadness! be Softness! be solemn Gloom!
Be Death! be Doubt! be the secret of Night!
Be the spell of Beauty! but past the tomb

Thou wendest not with us, accursed Shadow!
That makest a fable of all real things:—
The gold of wisdom, the El Dorado
Of art, a happier musing brings

Far off—worlds off—in the Pleiads seven
Is a Star of the Stars—Alcyonë—
The orb which moves never in all the Heaven,
The centre of all sweet Light we see.

And there, thou Shadow of Earth's pale seeming!
The wisest say no shadow can be,
But perfect splendours, lucidly streaming,
And Life and Light at intensity.

Then why did the artist show it thus—
The Sorrow of Sorrows personified—
Painting the carpenter's Son for us
And the Shadow behind of the Crucified?

Meek and sweet in the sun He stands,
Drinking the air of His Syrian skies;
Lifting to Heaven toil-wearied hands,
Seeing "His Father" with those mild eyes;

Gazing from trestle and bench and saw,
To the Kingdom kept for His rule above.
O Christ, the Lord! we see with awe!
Ah! Joseph's son! we look with love!

Ah! Mary Mother! we watch with moans
Marking that phantom thy sweet eyes see,
That hateful *Shadow* upon the stones,
That sign of a coming agony!

Did it happen so once in Nazareth?
Did a Christmas sun show such a sight,
Making from Life a spectre of Death,
Mocking our "Light of the World" with Light?

He tells us—this artist—one Christmas-tide,
The sunset painted that ominous Cross;
The shadows of evening prophesied
The hyssop to Him, and to us the loss.

For, her pang is the pang of us, every one:
Wherever the Light shines the Shadow is;
Where beams a smile must be heard a moan;
The anguish follows the flying bliss.

Yon crown which the Magi brought to her,
It makes a vision of brows that bleed;
Yon censer of spikenard and balm and myrrh,
It looks on the wall like a "sponge and reed."

And, therefore, long ago was it written—
Of a Christmas to come in the realms of Light—
"The curse shall depart and death shall be smitten,
And then *there shall be no more night.*"

O Christ, our Lord, in that Shadowless Land,
Be mindful of these sad shadows which lie!
Look forth and mark what a woeful band
Of glooms attend us across Thy sky!

"Christmas!" and hear what wars and woe!
"Christmas!" and see what grief o'er all!
Lord Christ! our suns shine out to show
Crosses and thorns on Time's old wall!

So, if Thou art where that star gleams,
Alcyonë, or higher still,
Send down one blessed ray which beams
Free of all shadows—for they kill!

CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

[Suggested by the picture of Rembrandt in the National Gallery.]

MASTER, well done! thy sombre colours stoop,
As what they paint did, to the root of things!
Thy Christ hath eyes, whose weary glances droop,
Marred with much love, and all the ache it brings:
Thy children—soft, albeit, their Syrian grace—
Clasp sun-burnt breasts, and drink of milk that cost
Sweat to provide it; from each mother's face
Is gone the bridal beauty; lapsed and lost
Bliss from these bondsmen; yet, how the Divine
Breaks through the clay! how Truth's gold gilds the story!

How longing for heaven's light makes earth's gloom
shine!
How lovely, at its lowest, is love's glory!
We see him as He sate in Palestine.

Lord Christ! these are the little ones that come!
Thou spakest, "Suffer them;" yea, Thou didst say,
"Forbid them not, for in my kingdom some
Are like to such!" O Lord! do Angels lay
Small aching heads on sorrow-laden bosoms?
Do Thy young angels toil, and starve, and weep?
Hardly for these will ope life's morning blossoms
Before their days bring griefs, their nightly sleep
Dreams of the Roman whip. Ah, Master Mild!
Be some great secret of Thy kingdom said
To keep the grown man glad as this male child,
The woman pure as is that tender maid!
They "see Thy Father's face!" Then, how beguiled?

Little sweet sister, standing at His knee!
Small peasant sister! sucking at thy thumb,

Touched to thy tiny heart with the mystery,
Glad to be brought, but far too shy to come;
Ah! tremble, but steal closer; let it cover
All of thy head, that potent, piteous hand;
And, mothers! reach your round-eyed babies over
To take their turn, nought though they understand.
For these thereby are safe, being so kissed
By that Love's lips which kisses out of heaven;
And we, with little children, but no Christ,
Press near; perchance the blessing may be given
From theirs to ours, though we His face have missed.

ON A CYCLAMEN,

PLUCKED AT CANA OF GALILEE, AND PRESENTED TO A BRIDE.

ONLY a Flower! but, then, it grew
On the green mountains which en-ring
Kana-el-Jelîl; looking to
The village, and the little Spring!

The Love which did those bridals bless
Ever and ever on you shine!
Make happier all your happiness,
And turn its water into wine!

A DISCOURSE OF BUDDHA.

HEREWITH, a broken gem of Buddha's lore!
One beamlet of the brightness of his love!
Rose-light which lingers when the sun is down
Such space that men may find a path thereby.
Ananda told his Brethren of the robe
In the full Sangha, saying, "I have heard!"

Ananda said: "Upon a certain morn
At Rajagriha, in Wasanta-time,
Lord Buddha sate—the great Tathâgato—
Speaking with wayfarers words such as these.
There was a temple built to Surya
Between the dyers' sheds and grain-market,
With white porch sheltered by a peepal-tree;
Whereby he sate; and a priest questioned him—
"Which is Life's chief good, Master?" And he spake:

"Shadows are good when the high sun is flaming,
From wheresoe'er they fall;
Some take their rest beneath the holy temple,
Some by the prison-wall.

"The King's gilt palace-roof shuts out the sunshine,
So doth the dyers' shed!
Which is the chiefest shade of all these shadows?"
"They are alike!" one said.

"So is it," quoth he: "with all shows of living;
As shadows fall, they fall!
Rest under, if ye must, but question not
Which is the best of all.

"Yet, some trees in the forest wave with fragrance
Of fruit and bloom o'erhead;
And some are evil, bearing fruitless branches,
Whence poisonous air is spread."

"Therefore, though all be false, seek, if ye must,
Right shelter from life's heat.
Lo! those do well who toil for wife and child
Threading the burning street!

"Good is it helping kindred! good to dwell
Blameless and just to all;
Good to give alms, with goodwill in the heart,
Albeit the store be small!

"Good to speak sweet and gentle words, to be
Merciful, patient, mild;
To hear the Law, and keep it, leading days
Innocent, undefiled.

"These be chief goods—for evil by its like
Ends not, nor hate by hate:
By love hate ceaseth; by well-doing ill;
By knowledge life's sad state.

"But see where soars an eagle! mark those wings
Which cleave the blue, cool skies!
What shadow needeth yon proud Lord of Air
To shield his fearless eyes?

"Rise from this life; lift upon pinions bold
Hearts free and great as his;
The eagle seeks no shadow, nor the wise
Greater or lesser bliss!"

THE TWELVE MONTHS.

JANUARY.

RAIN—hail—sleet—snow!—But in my East
This is the time when palm-trees quicken
With flowers, wherefrom the Arabs' feast
Of amber dates will thenceforth thicken.

Palms,—he and she—in sight they grow;
And o'er the desert-sands is wafted,
On light airs of the After-glow,
That golden dust whence fruit is grafted.

Ah, happy trees! who feel no frost
Of winter-time, to chill your gladness;
And grow not close enough for cost
Of bliss fulfilled, which heightens sadness;

No grey reality's alloy
Your green ideal can diminish!
You have love's kiss, in all its joy,
Without love's lips, which let it finish!

FEBRUARY.

Fair Grecian legend, that, in Spring,
Seeking sweet tale for sunnier hours,
Fabled how Enna's queen did bring
Back from the under-world her flowers!

Whence come ye else, goblets of gold,
Which men the yellow crocus call?
You snowdrops, maiden-meek and cold,
What other fingers let you fall?

What hand but hers, who, wont to rove
The asphodel in Himera,
Torn thence by an ungentle love,
Flung not her favourites away?

King of dark death! on thoughts that roam
Thy passion and thy power were spent:
When blossom-time is come at home,
Homeward the soul's strong wings are bent.

So comes she, with her pleasant wont,
When Spring-time chases Winter cold,
Couching against his frozen front
Her tiny spears of green and gold.

MARCH.

WELCOME, North-wind! from the Norland;
Strike upon our foremost foreland,
Sweep away across the moorland,
Do thy lusty kind!

Thou and we were born together
In the black Norwegian weather;
Birds we be of one brave feather,
Welcome, bully wind!

Buss us! set our girls' cheeks glowing;
Southern blood asks sun for flowing,
North blood warms when winds are blowing,
Most of all winds, thou;
There's a sea-smack in thy kisses
Better than all breezy blisses,
So we know, our kinsman this is:
Buss us! cheek and brow.

Rollick out thy wild sea-catches,
Roar thy stormy mad sea-snatches,
What bare masts and battened hatches
Thou hast left behind;
Ring it, till our ears shall ring, too,
How thou mad'st the Frenchman bring-to:
That's the music Northmen sing to,
Burly brother wind!

Go! with train of spray and sea-bird,
Fling the milky waves to leeward,
Drive the ragged rain-clouds seaward,
Chase the scudding ships;
To the south wind take our greeting,
Bid him bring the Spring—his Sweeting—
Say what glad hearts wait her meeting,
What bright eyes and lips.

APRIL.

Blossom of the almond-trees,
April's gift to April's bees,
Birthday ornament of spring,
Flora's fairest daughterling!—
Coming when no flow'rets dare
Trust the cruel outer air;
When the royal king-cup bold
Will not don his coat of gold;
And the sturdy blackthorn spray
Keeps its silver for the May;—
Coming when no flow'rets would,
Save thy lowly sisterhood

Early violets, blue and white,
Dying for their love of light.
Almond blossom, sent to teach us
That the spring-days soon will reach us,
Lest, with longing over-tried,
We die as the violets died.
Blossom, clouding all the tree
With thy crimson 'broidery,
Long before a leaf of green
On the bravest bough is seen;
Ah! when wintry winds are swinging
All thy red bells into ringing,
With a bee in every bell,
Almond bloom, we greet thee well!

MAY.

WHO cares on the land to stay,
Wasting the wealth of a day?
The yellow fields leave
For the meadows that heave,
And away to the sea—away!

To the meadows far out on the deep,
Whose ploughs are the winds that sweep
The green furrows high,
When into the sky
The silvery foam-bells leap.

At sea!—my bark—at sea!
With the winds, and the wild clouds and me;
The low shore soon
Will be down with the moon,
And none on the waves but we!

Thy wings are abroad, my bird,
And the sound of their speed is heard;
The scud flieth west,
And the gull to her nest,
But they lag far behind us, my bird!

White as my true love's neck
Are the sails that shadow thy deck;
And thine image wan,
Like the stream-mirrored swan,
Lies dim on thy dancing track.

On! on! with a swoop and a swirl,
High over the clear waves' curl;
Under thy prow,
Like a fairy, now,
Make the blue water bubble with pearl!

Lo! yonder, my lady, the light!
'Tis the last of the land in sight!
Look once—and away!
Bows down in the spray;
Lighted on by the lamps of the night!

JUNE.

Lily of June, pearl-petalled, emerald-leaved!
A sceptre thou, a silver-studded wand
By lusty June, the Lord of Summer, waved,
To give to blade and bud his high command.

Nay! not a sceptre, but a seated Bride,
The white Sultana of a world of flowers,
Chosen, o'er all their passion and their pride,
To reign with June, Lady of azure hours.

Ah, vestal-bosomed! Thou that, all the May,
From maidenly reserve would'st not depart,
Till June's warm wooing won thee to display
The golden secret hidden at thy heart.

Lay thy white heart bare to the Summer King!
Brim thy broad chalice for him with fresh rain!
Fling to him from thy milky censers, fling
Fine fragrances, a Bride without a stain!

Without?—look, June! thy pearly love is smutched!
That which did wake her gentle beauty, slays;
Alas! that nothing lovely lasts, if touched
By aught more earnest than a longing gaze.

JULY.

PROUD, on the bosom of the river,
White-winged the vessels come and go,
Dropping down with ingots to deliver,
Drifting up stately on the flow.
Mirrored in the sparkling waters under,
Mightily rising to the sky,

Kings of the sunshine and the thunder,
Come they and go they, in July.

Quiet, in the reaches of the river,
Blooms the sea-poppy all alone;
Hidden by the marshy sedges ever,
Who knows its golden cup is blown?
Who cares if far-distant billows,
Rocking the great ships to sea,
Underneath the tassels of the willows
Rocks the sea-poppy and the bee?

Rocks the marsh-blossom with its burden,
Only a worker bee at most!
Working for nothing but the guerdon
To live on its honey in the frost.
The outward-bound ye watch, and the incomer;
The bee and the blossom none espy!
But those have their portion in the summer,
In the glad, gold sunshine of July.

AUGUST.

[From the German.]

ONCE, with a Landlord wondrous fine,
A weary guest, I tarried,
A golden pippin was his sign,
Upon a green branch carried!

Mine host—he was an apple-tree
With whom I took my leisure;
Fair fruit, and mellowed juicily,
He gave me from his treasure.

There came to that same hostel gay
Bright guests, in brave adorning;
A merry feast they made all day,
And sang, and slept till morning.

I, too, to rest my body laid
On bed of crimson clover;
The landlord with his own broad shade
Carefully spread me over.

I rose;—I called to pay the score,
But "No!" he grandly boweth;
Now, root and fruit, for evermore
God bless him, while he groweth!

SEPTEMBER.

THE harvest-moon stands on the sea,
Her golden rim's adrip;
She lights the sheaves on many a lea,
The sails on many a ship;
Glitter, sweet Queen! upon the spray,
And glimmer on the heather;
Right fair thy ray to gild the way
Where lovers walk together.

The red wheat rustles, and the vines
Are purple to the foot;
And true-love, waiting patient, wins
Its blessed time of fruit:
Lamp of all lovers, Lady-moon!
Light these ripe lips together
Which reap alone a harvest sown
Long ere September weather.

OCTOBER.

A BOLD brunette she is, radiant with mirth,
Who comes a-tripping over corn-fields cropped;
Fruits and blown roses, from her full arms dropped,
Carpet her feet along the gladdened earth;

Around her brow glitters a careless crown
Of bronzëd oak, and apple-leaves, and vine;
And russet-nuts and country berries twine
About her gleaming shoulders and loose gown.

Like grapes at vintage, where the ripe wine glows,
Glows so her sweet cheek, summer-touched but fair;
And, like grape-tendrils, all her wealth of hair,
Gold on a ground of brown, nods as she goes:

Grapes too, a-spirt, her brimming fingers bear,
A dainty winepress, pouring wet and warm
The crimson river over wrist and arm,
And on her lips—adding no crimson there!

Ah! golden autumn hours—fly not so fast!
Let the sweet Lady long with us delay;
The sunset makes the sun so wished-for,—stay!
Of three fair sisters—loveliest and the last!

But after laughter ever follows grief,
And Pleasure's sunshine brings its shadow Pain;
Even now begins the dreary time again,
The first dull patter of the first dead leaf.

NOVEMBER.

COME! in thy veil of ashen cloud
With mists around thee, like a shroud,
And wan face coloured with no light
Of sun or moon, by day or night;
I would not see thee glad and gay
Dark month! that called my Love away!

I would not see thee otherwise
Grey month! that hast the dying eyes;
Cold month! that com'st with icy hands
Chaining the waters and the lands!

So didst thou chill two hearts at play,
Dark month! that called my Love away!

And yet, I know, behind thy mists
The bright Sun shines, Love's star subsists!
If we could lift thy veil, may be,
Thy hidden face were good to see!
Come as thou wilt—I say not nay,
Dark month! that called my Love away!

November 1864.

DECEMBER.

In fret-work of frost and spangle of snow
Unto his end the year doth wend;
And sadly for some the days did go,
And glad for some were beginning and end!
But—sad or glad—grieve not for his death,
Mournfully counting your measures of breath,
You, that, before the stars began,
Were seed of woman and promise of man,
You who are older than Aldebaran!
It was but a ring round about the Sun,
One passing dance of the planets done;

One step of the Infinite Minuet
Which the great worlds pace, to a music set
By Life immortal and Love divine:
Whereof is struck, in your threescore and ten,
One chord of the harmony, fair and fine,
Of that which maketh us women and men!
In fret-work of frost and spangle of snow,
Sad or glad—let the old year go!

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GREEK POETS.

Flowers from Greek gardens, Fannie!—old turned new,
Doric, Æolic, Attic, planted here;
You made the pleasant sunshine, where they grew—
Such as the growth is, take the blossoms, Dear!

TRANSLATIONS

FROM THE TWENTY-SECOND BOOK OF THE ODYSSEY.

THEREUPON, stripping his tatters away, many-counselled Ulysses
Strode to the threshold, and stood there, upholding his bow, and his quiver
Brim-full of shafts; on the ground poured he rattling the swift-wingèd arrows
All in a heap at his feet; then turned to the suitors and spake this:
"Yonder match has been played; ye have seen my skill at the target:
Now I will shoot a shot that no man, I fancy, will better,
Into a different mark—if I may—and Apollo shall aid me."

Straight at Antinoüs, then, a keen-bladed arrow he levelled:

Grasping a golden cup stood the chief—a cup with two handles;

Deep in the draught he was, no thought in his mind of destruction!

How should a lord at the feast, in the midst of the banqueters, drinking,

Dream that, one against many — nay, though the strongest of mortals,

Thus could do him to death, and send him to sudden perdition?

Even as he quaffed, in the jowl the shaft of Odusseus transfixed him:

Right thro' the soft o' the neck the steel point travelled; his body

Tottered, bowed, and fell; from his fingers the two-handled goblet

Clattered; a gush of blood burst thick and hot from his nostrils!

Sprawling and writhing, the feet of him kicked the board and o'erset it,

Spilling the viands and wine, overturning the roast meat and boiled meat,
Mixing the cates and fruit with his blood. The suitors, affrighted,
Sprang from the benches on this side and that side, and ran to the dead man,
Glaring for shield or for spear along the walls of the palace:
Not one spear there was, nor sword, nor target to help them;
Then they turned with furious words on Odusseus, and cursed him:
"Stranger, thou shootest too well; but this is the last of thy shooting!
Death shall have thee for this! Thou hast killed with thy villainous arrow
One of the Ithaca princes, as noble and lordly as any,
Great in birth and deed: for this thing the vultures shall pick thee."

Each of them waited, expecting the man would surely crave pardon,

Saying, "the arrow slipped," that "the deed was wrought maladventure."

Fools, who did not feel Death's portals yawning to take them!

Then, with terrible eyes broke forth the wrathful Odusseus:

"Dogs! ye did not think I should ever live to come hither,

Back from the city of Troy; and so ye harried my palace,

Ravished my handmaids, and, I being breathing, ye dared to beset her—

Her! my wife, Penelope—her! with your impudent suings,

Nothing regarding the gods, who reign in infinite heaven,

Neither believing that any man lived who would shrewdly requite you.

Now for all of you—all!—the hour is arrived of your judgment."

Sickly their visages waxed with fear as his accents resounded;

Hither and thither they rolled their eyes to find any refuge;

Only Eurymachus gathered his breath, and answered in this way:

"If, of a truth, thou art he, the Odusseus of Ithaca, living,

Just are thy words, and rightful thy wrath at the deeds of the princes,

Done without shame in thy halls, and done in thy fields, without number.

Yet this dead man here was the head and front of our sinning:

He, Antinoüs, set us on to the worst of our doings;

Caring not half so much for thy beauteous queen, nor to win her,

As that this thing might be, the which dread Zeus hath forbidden,

Namely, to reign alone over all thine Ithacan kingdom,

King and Lord—having slain thy son and gotten his birthright.

Now he is dead for his scheme; but do thou have mercy and spare us—

Liegemen of thine and submissive;—then we, going
home to our houses,
Thence will bring for whatever was eaten or drunk in
thy palace
Each of us twenty-fold back to thee here, a great
restitution.
Brass and gold we will fetch, and whatsoever may
please thee,
Only be merciful now, and let not thine anger o'er-
whelm us."

Him, with a look of fire, the mighty Odusseus thus
answered:—
"Not if ye brought me, Eurymachus! all that ye have
on the islands,
All that is yours to-day, and all ye may ever own after,
Would I for this hold back my hand from its office of
death here.
Deed for deed I will have my price in the blood of
your bodies.
Now, then, choose ye your way to die, and face me
and fight me;

Else turn about and fly from the fates that I send from my bowstring—
If, indeed, ye can fly—for I think my shafts will go faster."

Hearing his words, their knees grew loose and their hearts were as water;
Yet once more Eurymachus spake—this time to the suitors:
"Friends, the man is in earnest; he will not be stayed from his purpose,
But while one arrow is left he will shoot with his terrible bow there
Shot upon shot from the threshold, till each of us fall by his fellow,
Slain in a pile. Recall, then, our manhood! Stand not to be butchered!
Draw what swords we have, and hold the board up before us,
So, with its fence, let us rush in close order upon him! If one man

Thrust his way past the door, he may come to the town and call succour,
Then peradventure this shooter will pull his bow for the last time."

So, as he spoke, from its scabbard Eurymachus drew forth his falchion,—
Bronze in the blade, two-edged,—and rushed with a yell to the portal,
Waving it high; but right as he came the watchful Odusseus
Let go a whistling shaft which took him under the breast-bone,
Plunging barb-deep in the liver. Down out of his grasp fell the falchion,
Clattering he rolled in the wreck of the festival, screaming and twisting:
Platters and food flew about, and cups whirled hither and thither,
While the wretch beat this way and that his head on the pavement,

Mad with the anguish; and struck with his feet the boards and the benches,
Beating a frightful tune, till death's fog clouded his eyeballs.

Next Amphinomus faced his fate, and ran at Odusseus
Headlong, drawing his keen-edged blade, and desperately hoping
If he might break his way; but him Telemachus dealt with,
Striking him quick as he passed with the bronze-barbed spear in the shoulders—
Right through the back it drove, and out at the ribs made a passage.
Down with a crash he fell, full-front on the stones of the pavement:
Nay, and Telemachus left him so, with the spear in his shoulders,
Dreading lest one of the suitors, the while he tugged at the weapon,

Either with sword or with club should find him helpless, and slay him;
Therefore back to his father he came, and spake in his ear this:

"Father, 'twere good I fetched thee shield, and spears, and a helmet;
Armed thou shouldst be for the rest of this matter, and I, having donned it,
Armour will bring for the swineherd and cowherd, if thou canst abide here."

Answered him, under his breath, the watchful and mighty Odusseus—
"Go for them quickly, Telemachus! whilst I have arrows to stop them,
Lest the dogs should see me in straits, and push their way past me."

[Telemachus hastens to the upper apartments, and brings the weapons and armour, while Ulysses still shoots into the affrighted flock of princes.]

So, when the arrows were shot—each arrow a death for the suitors—
Calmly he set down his bow at the porch, in the nook of the door-post;
Then, about his arm a shield of four thicknesses bracing,
Over his temples a helmet he fastened, implacably nodding
Thwart his countenance fierce, with its black-plumes of horse-hair; and each hand
Grasped a spear of bronze, keen-sharpened, awful to smite with.

[The suitors agree to hurl six javelins at a time against Ulysses, but Minerva renders the first shower vain, and the return spears of the four at the door kill four more princes. Hereupon abject terror falls upon the guilty lords. They herd together and rush about, "like cattle when the days are long and hot, and the gad-fly stings," while Ulysses, with his three companions, chases and despatches them "like a hawk striking fluttering birds." Two only are spared, Phemius the poet, and Medon. Revenge is complete! Odusseus looks round, but none are left alive to despatch;]

All, wherever he gazed, lay motionless, bloody, and dusty,

Tumbled together and foul; like fish that the fisherman gathers
Out from the foamy sea, and hales on the brink of the shingle.
There they sprawl, gills wide, heaped head and tail, and the sunshine
Dries them where they lie on the yellow bend of the sea-shore:
Just so the suitors lay, like a haul of fish, on the pavement.

THE heavenly Muses Three
A branch of laurel gave, which they had plucked,
To be my sceptre; and they breathed a song
In music on my soul, and bade me set
Things past and things to be to that high strain;
Also they bade me sing the race of gods,
Themselves, at first and last, ever remembering.

From Hesiod.

ONCE a hawk said this to a nightingale;—
The robber had the singer in his claws,
High up among the clouds, and Philomel,
Trembling, and nipped in those sharp crooked talons,
Bewailed; whereat the hawk screamed savagely:
"Why pipe, my friend? I am too strong to heed;
I take you where I will, for all your singing;
To eat you if I like, or let you go;
And he's a fool that fights against his fate:
He loses, and gets shame, beside his tears."

From Hesiod.

THEN Zeus let loose his wrath! his awful heart,
Brimful of anger, gave his will its way!
From Heaven's black vault and high Olympus' crags
Impetuous bade he start the leashed-up fires:
Lightning and thunder and the thunderbolts
Flew from his mighty hand—flame with the crash,
And bolts with both—fire, noise, and bolts all mixed!
Groaned fruitful Mother Earth, wrapped in the war;
All her vast forests crackled, lightning-scorched;
The parched fields heaved and split; the ocean-floods

Bubbled, with all their streams, and lurid smoke
Curled round the Titans fighting—whence a glare
Blazed up across and through the infinite air;
So that those warrior-ranks, albeit like gods,
Were blinded with the dazzle of the flash,
And deaf with leaping peals. *From Hesiod.*

"THE WOMAN BORN OF A BEE."

FROM youth to age she grows dear to her spouse;
Fills with fair girls and sturdy boys his house;
Among all women womanliest seems,
And heavenly grace about her mild brow gleams.
A gentle wife, a noble friend she walks,
Nor ever with the gossipmongers talks;
Such women sometimes Zeus to mortals gives,
The glory and the solace of their lives.

From Simonides of Amorgos.

SPLENDOUR-THRONED Queen! immortal Aphrodite!
Daughter of Jove—Enchantress! I implore thee
Vex not my soul with agonies and anguish;
Slay me not, Goddess!

Come in thy pity—come, if I have prayed thee;
Come at the cry of my sorrow; in the old times
Oft thou hast heard and left thy Father's heaven,
Left the gold houses,
Yoking thy chariot. Swiftly did the doves fly,
Swiftly they brought thee, waving plumes of wonder—
Waving their pale plumes all across the æther,
All down the azure!
Very soon they lighted. Then didst thou, Divine one!
Laugh a bright laugh from lips and eyes eternal;
Ask me, "What ailed me?—wherefore out of heaven
Thus I had called thee?
What it was made me madden in my heart so?"
Question me, smiling—say to me, "My Sappho!
Who is it wrongs thee? tell me who refuses
Thee, vainly sighing."
"Be it who it may be, he that flies shall follow;
He that rejects gifts, soon shall bring thee many;
He that hates now shall love thee dearly, madly—
Ay, though thou wouldst not."

So once again come, Mistress; and, releasing
Me from my sadness, give me what I sue for;
Grant me my prayer, and be as heretofore now
Friend and Protectress!

From Sappho.

HESPERUS brings all things back
Which the day-light made us lack;
Brings the sheep and goats to rest,
Brings the baby to the breast.

From Sappho.

LOVE once among the roses
Perceived a bee reposing,
And wondered what the beast was,
And touched it, so it stung him.
Sorely his finger smarted,
And bitterly he greeted,
And wrung his hands together;
And half he ran, half fluttered
To Cytheræa's bosom,
Unto his fair, sweet mother.
Loud sobbed he, "Ai! ai! mother!

Olola! I am murdered!
Olola! it has killed me!
A small brown snake with winglets,
Which men the bumble-bee call,
Bit me!" But Cytheræa
Said, laughing, "Ah, my baby,
If bees' stings hurt so sorely,
Bethink thee what the smart is
Of those, Love, whom thou piercest."

From Anacreon.

DAUGHTER of Justice, wingëd Nemesis!
Queen of the awful eyes,
Whose silent sentence judgeth mortal life!
Thou with thy curb of steel,
Which proudest jaws must feel,
Stayest the snort and champ of human strife;
And, hating miserable pride of men,
Dost tame fierce hearts, and turn them meek agen.

Under thy wheel,—unresting, trackless,—all
Our joys and griefs befall;

In thy full sight our secret things go on;
Step after step thy wrath
Follows the caitiff's path,
And at his triumph breaks his vile neck-bone.
To all alike thou metest out their due,
Cubit for cubit, inch for inch—stern—true.

From Mesomedes.

LIFE without golden love—what bliss is this?
Oh, let me die when love is dead with me!
The stolen words, the honeyed gifts, the kiss,
These are the blossoms of youth's glorious tree.

From Mimnermus.

THE FIRST IDYLL OF THEOCRITUS.

THYRSIS.

SOFTLY the sway of the pine-branches murmurs a melody, Shepherd!
Down by the rim of the fountain, and softly dost thou, on the Pan-pipes,
Pipe to the pines: next to Pan thou bearest the bell for rare music.
Say that he wins a great-horn'd goat, then thine is a she-goat;
Say that the she-goat is his, but thine is the kid, then; and tender
Savours the meat of a kid—till she comes to the bearing and milking.

GOATHERD.

Sweeter I call thy strain than the tinkle of water that trickles,
Tinkling, and trickling, and rippling adown the green shelves of the mountain.

If we must grant the high Muses their prize from the pick of the wethers,
Certainly thine is a ewe: or if a ewe pleases their fancy,
Then at the least will a lamb come to thee—to drive to thy sheep-folds.

THYRSIS.

Sit thee adown, good friend—sit down, and pipe to us, Shepherd!
Here where the side of the hill slopes fair, and the myrtles are thickest,
Blow the brave melody out: the yearlings can pasture around us!

GOATHERD.

Nay! 'twere a sin, 'twere a sin!—the sun's at his highest, my Thyrsis;
Pan would be anger'd to hear me—just now, he breaks off from hunting,
Stretches his hairy limbs in the shade, and puffs his great nostrils,
Panting, and surly for lack of breath, and longing for slumber.

You now, Thyrsis, might sing! you know the ballad of Daphnis:

None of our woodside-singers have half such a trick at the measure.

Couch we here under these elms, on the grass at the foot of the stone-god,

Facing the fountain, and looking right on to the mountains and meadows,

Over the tops of the oaks; and if you sing only so deftly

As you did once on that day when Chromis the African dared you,

Look! I will give you my goat; the dam of a couplet of weanlings;

Udder she carries for both, and then to fill two of thy milk-bowls.

Her, and a cup cut in beech, two-handled and polished with beeswax,

Clean and new, with the smell of the chisel and fresh wood about it:

All round its rim, on the top, there creeps a string of ground ivy,

Twisted and tangled with woodbine, while here and there, in the circle,

Tendrils curl and clasp—with bunches of berries among them.

Outside a damsel is carved—so fair the gods might have wrought her!

Neat and trim, with her mantle and net—and—this hand and that hand—

Two youths—both long-hair'd—both comely—contend for her favours

Angrily; never a jot cares my pretty jade for their anger!

Sometimes she flings a smile to one, and frowns on his fellow,

Sometimes she softens to t'other — and there they stand in the beechwood,

Laugh'd at, but mad with love—half-teased, half-pleased at the wanton.

Next a fisherman comes, cut out on a rock, and its ledges

Jut up rough and stark;—the old boy, done to a marvel,

Staggers and sweats at his work—just like a fisherman hauling;
Looking upon it you'd swear the work was alive, and no picture,
So do the veins knot up and swell in his neck and his shoulders,
For, though he's wrinkled and grey, there's stuff left yet in my ancient.
Next to this old sea-dog you see a vine—all the branches
Heavy with globing grapes—a little lad sits by a thicket,
Guarding the grapes, but close at hand two foxes come creeping,
One in the vineyard munches the clusters—one's after the wallet:
Gods! you can see his scheme—he'll keep his eye on the youngster,
Till that he finds a chance, and leaves him dinnerless: Blind one!
Why do you sit there weaving with grasses a cage for your crickets,

Plaiting the grasses, and wholly forgetting your wallet and dinner,

Wholly forgetting your grapes—wrapped up in those grasshopper-engines?

All the work in this cup's filled in with leaves of acanthus;

'Tis an Æolic thing—and sooth, of a wonderful fancy,

Sir! it cost me to buy of the Calydon sailor, a big cheese

Made of snow-white curds, and a she-goat into the bargain;

Yet it has touch'd no lip, but lies this while in my cottage.

See now! I mean it for you! 'tis yours, if you sing us that ditty

Half so well as you sang it before to the Himera shepherds.

No thanks! do but sing!—there's no more sunshine nor singing

Under the grass—in the realms of the dead men—where all is forgotten!

THE "PHARMAKEUTRIA" OF THEOCRITUS.

THESTYLIS! where are the laurel-leaves? Quick, girl! bring me the love-spells!
Fasten the scarlet thread, in and out, round the brim of the beaker!
Quick! for I mean to charm my lover, my false-hearted lover.
Twelve long days are passed, and he never has once come to see me,
Knows not if I be living or dead—never sends me a message,
No! not even a word at my door! Has he gone to some new love,
Light as the pinions of Eros, and careless as Queen Aphrodite?
Down to the town I will hasten to-morrow, and see him, and ask him
Face to face, why he treats me so coldly: but Thestylis! thou now

Help me to try him with charms; and, O Moon! glitter thy brightest!

Shine, pale Moon! for thee I invoke, and thy sister and shadow

Hecate—the under-world Moon, whom even the little dogs howl at

When she goes forth o'er the graves, and all her foot-marks are bloody:

Make my magic to-night as strong as ever was Circe's,

Potent as white Perimede's, and mighty as Colchian Medea's!

Wry-neck! whirl, and scream, and whirl, and bring me my lover!

Turn wheel, turn! and burn, cake, burn! Ah! Thestylis, sprinkle!

What are you doing to tremble so? sprinkle the salt on the brazier!

Where were your wits gone, girl? or is it that you too must vex me?

Sprinkle the salt, and say, "Flesh and blood of Delphis I scatter!"

Little bird! scream, and whirl, and scream, and bring me my lover!

Delphis grieves me—in my turn
I will grieve him. Laurel, burn!
As thy bright leaves curl and crack,
Smoke and blaze and vanish black,
Leaving not a leaf to see:
May his bosom love-scorched be!

Little bird! whirl, and scream, little bird! and bring me my lover!

As I melt this waxen ball
May the great gods hear me call,
And Delphis melt with love for me!
And as this wheel turns rapidly
So may Queen Venus speed the charms,
And bring him quickly to my arms!

Little bird, whirl, whirl, whirl! scream! scream! and bring me my lover!

Now I scatter on the flame
Bran. Oh! Artemis! thy name
Moves the Judge of Hell to fear,
Rhadamanth himself! Then hear!
Hear! ah, hear me! Thestylis,
Did the dogs bark? Yes, it is!
'Tis the goddess in the street!
Beat the cymbals! quick, girl! beat!

Little bird, scream—scream louder! and bring me my false-hearted lover!

Look! the restless sea is sleeping,
Milk-white ripples curling, creeping!
Listen! all the winds are quiet,
Folded up from rage and riot!
Only in my heart the pain
Wakes, and will not sleep again!
Bitter pain the sport to be
Of him who hath unmaidened me.

Little bird, whirl—whirl fast! scream sharp—scream! call me my lover!

Thrice libations due I pay,
Thrice, great goddess! this I say,
Whom he loves now I know not,
But let her come to be forgot!
Clean forgot from head to feet
As Ariadne was at Crete.

Scream, little bird! more—more! scream, whirl, and fetch me my lover!

In Arcady there grows a flower,
Stings the herds with subtle power,
Drives them mad on vale and height:
Would I had that flower to-night!
Delphis should come quick to me,
Come, whate'er his company!

Scream for me still, little bird! scream once, and call me my lover!

Delphis left this gift with me:
In the fire I fling it. See!

Burn it red and burn it black,
Angry hissing flames! Alack!
It leaps away—he'll not return!
It only burneth as I burn;
And now 'tis ashes, pale and grey,
As pale as I grow day by day.

Scream ere you die, little bird! one cry, to call me my lover!

Lizards green and gold I take
(Mighty magic this will make),
Slit them down from chin to tail,
Squeeze their cold blood, cold and pale.
Thestylis, take this to-morrow
(It can work him bliss or sorrow),
Lay it on his threshold stone,
Spit to the left, and say alone,
"She whose heart you tread on here
Charms you, Delphis! Love, or fear!"

Dead are you, poor little fool? and you could not bring me my lover!

Ah, me! what shall I do? Alone, forlorn!—
I'll think the story over of my love,
How it began—what made the sweet pain come.
It was the day Anaxo was to walk
Bearing the basket for great Artemis,
With striped and spotted beasts in the procession;
Oh!—and you recollect—a lioness!

Lady Moon! listen and pity! and help me, bringing my lover!

And my old Thracian nurse, Theucharila,
Came—you remember—teasing, tempting me
To go and see them pass, and so I went.
O fool! I went wearing my yellow bodice,
And Clearista's purple train from Tyre.

Lady Moon! listen and pity, and say where tarries my lover!

And when we came hard by where Lycon lives
Upon the paved way, there I saw him first,
Delphis, with Eudamippus—oh, you know!

His hair danced back from off his brow, like sprays
Of bright amaracus, when west winds blow,
And all his neck, flushed with the heat of the games,
Shone as thou shinest, Moon! but rosier pearl!

Lady Moon! Lady Moon, listen, and pity; and bring me my lover!

I saw him—looked! loved!—oh, my foolish eyes!
Oh me! the coward colour of my cheeks!
Oh, heart that straight went mad! I did not mark
Those tame beasts any more; how I came home
I cannot call to mind; you know I lay
Ten days and nights indoors, and never rose.

Lady Moon! sweet pale Moon! have mercy, and bring me this lover!

I grew as pale—as white as thapsus-wood!
Say if I braided up my hair, or sang!
Say if I grew not to a ghost, with thinking!
When was the day you sought not who he was?
Where was the crone we did not plague for charms
To bring him? All in vain; he never came!

O Moon! hide not thy face. O white Moon! listen and pity!

So I grew sick with waiting, and I said,
"Ah, Thestylis, help!—heal me, or I die!
This Greek boy hath bewitched me. Go, my friend,
Watch at the gateway of the wrestling-school.
He cometh there, I think, to play or sit."

Silver-faced Queen of the Stars, thou know'st we are not as immortals!

And when he is alone, whisper full soft
And say, 'Simœtha bids thee come,' and then
If he will, bring him!" So you went, and came
Bringing my love to me. But when I heard
His sandals on the stone, and saw his face—

Lady Moon! hear this now, and pity, and shine while I tell you!

And saw his face,—I turned as cold as snow,
And tears—I wot not why—sprang to my lids,

And how to speak I knew not; not so much
As little children startled in the night,
That sob, and know it is all well—but sob,
And will not stint even for their mother's voice.
I was as dumb as dead things, Thestylis!

Queen of the planets and stars! forgive, and listen, and pity!

For he, with a bright gladness—not too bold—
Entered; and looked hard once, and then looked down,
And sat against my feet; and sitting, said,
"Only so little, sweet Simœtha! thou
Hast been the first to speak—as I was first
Against Philinus in the race to-day,—

White-sandalled Mistress of Night! have patience, and hear me and help me.

"I should have come, I swear it by my head!
To-morrow at the dusk. I meant to bring
Some choice rose-apples in my breast. Mayhap

You love them; and a crown of poplar leaves
Twisted with myrtle-buds and tied with red;"

Lady Moon, where is he now? so soft, so gentle, so fickle!

"And, if you had seemed kind, I should have spoke.
I was not hopeless, for I won the prize
At running, and the maidens call me fair.
The one prize I have longed for since the feast
Was once to touch the goal of those dear lips;
Then I could rest—not else! But had you frowned,
And bade me go, and barred your door on me,
Oh, Sweet! I think I should have come with lamps
And axes, and have stolen you like gold!"

Lady Moon, where is he now? so gentle, so earnest, so winning!

"How shall I," he went on, "thank the gods first,
And next you—you! the queen and life of me!
My kindest love—who bad'st me hither come
When I did burn for leave—yea! for I think
Hephæstus hath no flame like Eros lights!"

Lady Moon, look out of heaven, and find him, and bring him for pity.

So he spake, low and fair; and I, alas!
What could I do, but reach my hand to him,
And let him take it, and take me; and have
The kiss he sued for,—and another such?
My cheeks were white no more, nor my heart sad,
Nor any trouble left; but we sat close,
And the soft talk bubbled from lip to lip
Like fountains in the roses. All that time,
And many a time we sat so: never once
He failed to keep his word, and never once
Left, save with lingering foot. But, on a day,
He did not come, and then it was I heard
Stories, that vexed me, of another love:
Melixa's mother, and the harp-player
Told me—and both are friends—he'd come no more,
And that his house was loud with pipes and songs,
And gay with crowns, not woven now for me.
Oh, Thestylis! twelve days ago this was,
And never have I seen him since that time,

And never shall, except my magic works:
Therefore blow up the flame, and whirl the wheel!
Lady Moon! speed this spell; and fetch me my false-hearted lover.

Speed this spell! if it brings you,
Delphis! love shall live anew:
If in vain I watch and wait,
Delphis, love will turn to hate.
Subtle drugs I treasure here,
Drugs of awful force and fear:
A Syrian witch culled these for me
In lonely caverns by the sea.
Delphis! if I brew this drink
It will send you, as I think,
Down to Hades' gate, to seek
A colder lip, a paler cheek.
O Moon! spare me this at last!
O Moon! speed it—if I must.
And now farewell! for one day more
I wait, and love him as before!
Farewell, pale Moon, and planets bright,
Watchers with me this silent night!

A PASTORAL.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH IDYLL OF THEOCRITUS.

Daphnis. Wise was the beautiful Helen, who fled with Paris her Shepherd!

Wise is my beautiful Helen, who kisses her Daphnis and loves him!

The Shepherdess. Sir! never flatter yourself! there is nothing whatever in kisses!

D. Nothing in kissing, good sooth! there is this, there is honey and heart's-ease!

S. Well then! I lave my lips, and away goes thy kiss with the water!

D. Lavest thy lips? pretty lips! now, then, there is room for another!

S. Go to thy heifers: Impertinent! one is enough from a maiden.

D. Be not too proud, dear Maid! youth's spring-time passes like dreaming!

S. Raisins are nice as grapes, and the dry rose is fragrant as ever!

D. Rose-bud! come into the shade! in truth I have somewhat to tell thee.

S. No! for right well I remember the nonsense you cheated me once with.

D. Nay! but come under the elm-trees and listen how sweetly my pipe blows!

S. Pipe by thyself to thy heart's content, for I like not the music.

D. Ai! Ai! anger not Queen Cytheræa, the Mistress of Maidens!

S. Queen Cytheræa may frown, so Artemis guard me and love me.

D. Hush! never say so! the goddess will trip thee and hopelessly net thee!

S. Trip me what trips she may,—great Artemis' help can deliver;

Ah! take away your hand! indeed, you will force me to hurt you.

D. Never was maiden alive who shunned Eros; and think'st thou to 'scape him?

S. Nay! but by Pan I will try, tho' thou should'st pray him to yoke me.

D. Yes, but that is because I don't wish a worse lover to win thee!

S. Worse! I have plenty for choice, and nothing that pleases of plenty!

D. Cruel! when I—so true—am one, and the fondest of any.

S. Well, dear! what can I say? these weddings bring oceans of troubles.

D. Troubles? not they! nor cares; but only delightings and dances.

S. Sure, I have heard people tell all wives are afraid of their husbands.

D. Nonsense: they do as they please; just show me a wife who's not master.

S. Then—when the little ones come;—I quake so at thinking of children.

D. Artemis, she is thy Queen, and she is the helper of child-bed.

S. Well! I should horribly dread—moreover, it spoils a good figure.

D. When you have sweet little babes, girls and boys are new grace to their mother.

S. Ah! suppose—only suppose—I said "yes," what is there to live on?

D. All my sheep and goats, my pastures and groves, I shall give thee.

S. Swear it, lest after I yield, you will change your mind and desert me!

D. Never, so help me Pan!—no, not if you wished me to leave you.

S. If I say "yes," would you give me nice clothes, and a house, and a sheepfold?

D. Beautiful clothes you shall have, and a house, and the best of my sheepfolds.

S. What could I ever say to my father? so old, and to leave him!

D. Glad of thy marriage he'll be, as soon as he knows what my name is.

S. What is your name, dear Swain? some names are marvellous pretty!

D. Daphnis they call me: my father was Lycidas, mother Nomœa.

S. Highly respectable folk! and I, too, was born quite a lady.

D. Yes! very nearly, my Sweet! your father, you know, was Menalcas!

S. Oh, well! show me your grove, and where you have builded your cow-pens.

D. This is the way! you will see how tall the cypresses grow there.

S. Feed on, little she-goats! I am going awhile with the shepherd!

D. Graze on, bulls and cows! I show this maiden my pastures!

S. Naughty one! what do you do? take away your hand from my neck-string.

D. Nay, Dear! I did but seek if these dear little apples were ripened.

S. Oh, but I tremble, by Pan! take away your fingers, I tell you!

D. Fear nothing! beautiful Love! what a coward it is to be frightened!

S. No, but you rumple me so; and, see! you will ruin my amice!

D. Not if you sit on this beautiful fleece which I spread o'er the flowers.

S. Ah! ah! what can you want to unloosen the knot of my girdle?

D. Dear, 'tis a votive gift I would offer to Queen Aphrodite.

S. Nay, now! some one will come! indeed, but I think I hear something!

D. That is the cypresses singing our marriage-song, one to the other.

S. Look, you have rended my skirt; oh, stay, now—or I shall be naked.

D. Ne'er heed the rending! A new one I'll buy thee, far better and finer!

S. Anything now you'll give, but after—perhaps—not a salt-pinch.

D. Sweetheart! if life were to give, my life and soul I would give thee.

S. Artemis, be not wroth! thy maid forgetteth her mistress!

D. Eros shall have his calf, and Queen Aphrodite her heifer!

S. Ah me! here came I, maid;—but hence go I homewards no maiden!

D. Nay, no maid, but a wife! no maid, but, may be, a Mother!

So these two, in the strength of their youth, and the joy of their beauty,
Sported, with kisses and talk; then rose from their stolen embracements;
She to her unwitting sheep, to feed the younglings, departed
Blushing rose-red to the eyes, but in innermost bosom rejoicing;
Radiant he to his herds, heart-glad with the bliss of the bride-bed.

THE LAMENT OF ADONIS.

[FROM BION.]

WOE is me for Adonis! gone dead is the comely Adonis!

Dead is the god-like Adonis! the young Loves wail for him, ai! ai!

Sleep no more, wrapped in thy mantles of Tyrian, Lady of Cyprus!

Rise! don thy raiment of ashen, pale mourner, and beat on thy bosom!

Tell forth thy sorrow to all—he is dead, thy darling Adonis.

Ai! ai! wail for Adonis!—the young Loves wail for him, ai! ai!

Hurt on the hill lies Adonis the beautiful; torn with the boar's tusk,

Torn on the ivory thigh with the ivory tusk, his low gasping

Anguishes Cypris' soul : the dark blood trickles in rivers
Down from his snowy side; his eyes are dreamily dimming
Under their lids; and the rose leaves his lip, and the kisses upon it
Fade, and wax fainter, and faintest, and die, before Cypris can snatch them;
Dear to the Goddess his kiss, though it be not the kiss of the living;
Dear—but Adonis wists nought of the mouth that kissed him a-dying.

Ai! ai! wail for Adonis!—ai! ai! say the Loves for Adonis.
Cruel! ah, cruel the wound on the thigh of the hunter Adonis,
Yet in her innermost heart a deeper wears Queen Cytheræa.
Round the fair dead boy his hounds pace, dismally howling;
Round him the hill-spirits weep; but chiefest of all Aphrodite,

Letting her bright hair loose, goes wild through the depths of the forest

Passionate, panting, unkempt; with feet unsandalled, whose beauty

Thorn-bushes tear as she passes, and drip with the blood of the Goddess.

Bitterly, bitterly wailing, down all the long hollows she hurries,

Calling him Husband and Love—her Boy—her Syrian Hunter.

Meantime dead in his gore lieth he—from groin unto shoulder

Bloody; from breast to thigh; the fair young flank of Adonis,

Heretofore white as the snow, dull now, and dabbled with purple.

Ai! ai! woe for Adonis! the Loves say, "Woe for Adonis!"

That which hath killed her sweet lover hath killed a grace which was god-like!

Perfect the grace seemed of Cypris so long as Adonis was living;

Gone is her loveliness now—ai! ai! gone dead with Adonis:

All the hills echo it—all the oaks whisper it, "Ah, for Adonis!"

Even the river-waves ripple the sorrows of sad Aphrodite,

Even the springs on the hills drop tears for the hunter Adonis;

Yea, and the rose-leaves are redder for grief; for the grief Cytheræa

Tells in the hollow dells, and utters to townland and woodland.

Cry! cry! Lady of Cyprus, "Oh! dead is my darling Adonis!"

Echo answers thee back, "Lo! dead is thy darling Adonis."

Who, good sooth, but would say, Ai! ai! for her passionate story?

When that she saw and knew the wound of Adonis—the death-wound—

Watched the blood come red from the gash, and the white thigh a-waning,

Wide outraught she her arms, and bewailed, "Ah! stay, my Adonis!

Stay for me, ill-starred love!—stay! stay! till I take thee the last time,

Hold thee and fold thee, and lips meet lips, and mingle together.

Rouse thee—a little, Adonis! kiss back for the last time, beloved!

Kiss me—kiss me—only so long as the life of a kiss is!

So I may suck from thy soul to my mouth, to my innermost heart-beat,

All the breath of thy life, and take the last of its love-spell

Unto the uttermost end:—one kiss! I will tenderly keep it

As I did thee, my Adonis, sith thou dôst leave me, Adonis!

Far thou dost go and for long—thou goest to the region of shadows,

Unto a hateful and pitiless Power, and I, the unhappy,

Live! and alack! am a goddess, and cannot die and go after;

Take thou my spouse, dark Queen! have here my husband, as thou art
Stronger by far than I, and to thee goeth all that is goodly.
Utterly hapless my fate, and utterly hopeless my grief is,
Weeping my love who is dead, and hating the Fate that hath slain him.
Fled is my joy, like a dream; thou art dead, thrice lovely and longed for!
Queen Cytheræa is widowed—the Loves in my bowers are idle—
Gone my charmed girdle with thee; why, rash one, went'st thou a-hunting?
Mad wert thou, being so fair, to match thee with beasts of the forest."

So grieved the Lady of Cyprus—the young Loves wept for her sorrow,
Saying "Ai! ai! Cytheræa! gone dead is her darling Adonis."
Drop by drop as the hunter bleeds, the tears of the Goddess

Fall and blend with the blood, and both on the ground become flowers;

Rose-blossoms grow from the blood, and wind-lilies out of the tear-drops.

Ai! ai! comely Adonis—gone dead is the god-like Adonis;

Wander no longer bewailing in glade and in thicket, sad Lady!

Fair is his bed of leaves, and fragrant the couch where thy Dead lies,

Dead, but as lovely as life—yea, dead—but as lovely as sleep is;

Lap him in mantles of silk—such robes as he once took delight in

When, by thy side, he passed in caressing the season of starbeams,

Lulled on a couch of gold;—though dead, the raiments become him;

Heap on him garlands and blossoms and buds, entomb them together;

When that Adonis was dead, the flowers died too, and were withered!

Rain on him perfumes and odours, shed myrtle and spices upon him;

Let all delightful things die and go with him, for dead is the dearest!

So lies he lovely, in death-shroud of purple, the fair young Adonis;

Round about his couch the Loves go, piteously wailing,

Tearing their hair for Adonis; and one has charge of his arrows,

One of his polished bow, and one of his well-feathered quiver;

One unclasps his sandal, and one in a water-pot golden

Brings bright water to lave his limbs, and one at the bier-head

Fans with her pinions the forehead and eyes of the sleeping Adonis.

Ah! but for Cypris herself the young Loves sorrow the sorest;

Quenched are the marriage-lamps in the halls of the God Hymenæus,
Scattered his marriage crowns; no more he sings, "Hymen, oh! Hymen,"
"Hymen!" no more is the song he goes singing, but evermore "ai! ai!"
"Ah, for Adonis," he cries, and "Ah!" say the Graces, "Adonis!"
More than the marriage-god even, they weep for the Syrian huntsman,
One to the other still saying, "Dead—dead is the lovely Adonis!"
All the nine Muses bewail—but he hears no more music and singing,
Nay, not if that he would; Fate holds him fast and for ever.

Cease, Cytheræa! thy sobs; a little while rest from thine anguish,
Soon must thy tears flow again, and again come the season of sorrow!

A SOLDIER'S DEATH.

FAIR and becoming it is for a man
To fight for home and children and wife;
And death, that comes when the Fates please, can
Come never but once. To the glorious strife
Let each, then, go with a heart of brass,
As hard as the blade that their brave hands draw!
Die well! for die we must, alas,
Though the gods were our fathers. 'Tis Heaven's law!

From Callinus.

NEVER the glorious tale of him dies, nor the deeds of him ever!
Under the earth he may lie, yet he is greater than Fate,
Whomso, firm in the battle, unyielding, awaiting his death-blow,
Fighting for children and home, Mars the omnipotent slew.

But if he 'scape the message of death—the far-reaching slayer—
'Scape it and come safe home, bringing the garland of war;
Then in his town he is honoured, by old men and young men together,
Many a glory and joy hath he, or ever he dies.

From Tyrtæus.

To die must needs be sad, the gods do know it;
For were death sweet, they'd die, and straightway show it.

Sappho.

A LOVER'S WISH.

Look'st thou, my Star! on the Stars? Ah me! if I were the Heavens,
How with my thousands of eyes, I would look down upon thee!

From Plato.

LOTUS-EATING.

Whoso has tasted the honey-sweet fruit from the stem of the lotus,
Nevermore wishes to leave it, and never once longs to go homeward;
There would he stay if he could, content, with the eaters of the lotus,
Plucking and eating the lotus, forgetting that he was returning.

From Homer (*Od.* ix. 94).

TRUE LOVE.

DRINK from my cup, Dear! live my life!—be still
Young with my youth! have one heart, word, and will,
One love for both! let one wreath shade our eyes;
Be mad when I am—wise when I am wise!

From the Skolia.

SWORD AND SPEAR.

THE wealth I have is my sword and spear,
And the fence I fight with, my buckler fair;
With these, the lord of all, I go,
With these I plough, with these I sow;
With these I tread the sweet red wine
From grapes and vats that never were mine;
With these, albeit no varlets I fee,
Wherever I come, men lackey me.

For the knaves are afeard of my sword and spear,
And the fence I fight with, my buckler fair;
And so at my knees they humbly fall,
Bringing me all, and giving me all;
And they fawn upon me, because of my sword,
And because of my spear they call me lord;
For wealth unbounded is sword and spear,
And the fence that I fight with, my buckler fair.

From the Skolia.

PLANTS AND MEN.

ALAS! alas! when mallows die, when winter tempests kill
The light-leaved pallid parsley, or the curly tufted dill.
They live again, and come to leaf and seed each opening year;
But we that are the lords of all—we men of wisdom clear,
So strong and great and crafty, in dying once die out,
And lie for ever in the ground, stark, quiet, wrapped about
With sleep that hath no waking up.—

From Theocritus.

THE DEATH OF BION.

Ah! Bion, thou art poisoned! an ill drink hath brought thee low;
How could it pass such lips as thine, and not to honey grow?
And who in all the world could be so bad in heart and head,
To hear thee sing, then murder thee?—'tis Poesy that's dead!

From Moschus.

PRAYER TO THE MUSES.

[FROM PROCLUS.]

GLORY and praise to those sweet lamps of earth,
The nine fair Daughters of Almighty Jove.
Who all the passage dark to death from birth
Lead wandering souls with their bright beams of love.

Through cares of mortal life, through pain and woe,
The tender solace of their counsel saves;
The healing secrets of their songs forego
Despair; and when we tremble at the waves,

On life's wild sea of murk incertitude,
Their gentle touch upon the helm is pressed,
Their hand points out the beacon-star of good,
Where we shall make our harbour, and have rest,

The planet of our home wherefrom we fell,
Allured by this poor show of lower things,
Tempted among earth's dull deceits to dwell:
But oh! great Sisters, hear his prayer who sings,

And calm the restless flutter of his breast,
And fill him with the thirst for wisdom's stream;
Nor ever suffer earthly sights unblest
To turn his vision from the eternal beam.

Always and always higher, from the throng
Lawless and witless, lead his feet aright
Life's perils and perplexities among,
To the white centre of the sacred light.

Feed him with food of that rich fruit which grows
On stems of splendid learning—dower him still
With gifts of eloquence to vanquish those
Who err;—let soft persuasion change their will.

Hear, heavenly Sisters, hear! oh, ye who know
The winds of wisdom's sea, the course to steer;
Who light the flame that lightens all below,
And bring the spirits of the perfect there.

Where the immortals are, when this life's fever
Is left behind as a dread gulf o'erpassed;
And souls, like mariners, escaped for ever,
Throng on the happy foreland, saved at last.

So bring, high Muses! open me the scroll
Where Truth is writ in characters of fire;
Roll from my eyes the mists of life—oh! roll,
That I may have my spirit's deep desire,

Discerning the divine in undivine,
The god in man—the life of us in death;
Nor let dire doubtings pluck this soul of mine
From its most precious hope—to merge beneath

Deep floods of black oblivion, far from bliss,
From light, from wisdom—never let dark doom
Shut my lost soul in such despair as this,
My soul that is so weary of the gloom!

But hear and help, ye wise and shining Nine!
I yearn and strive towards your heavenly side;
Teach me the secret of the mystic sign,
Give me the lore that guards, the words that guide.

THE END.

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